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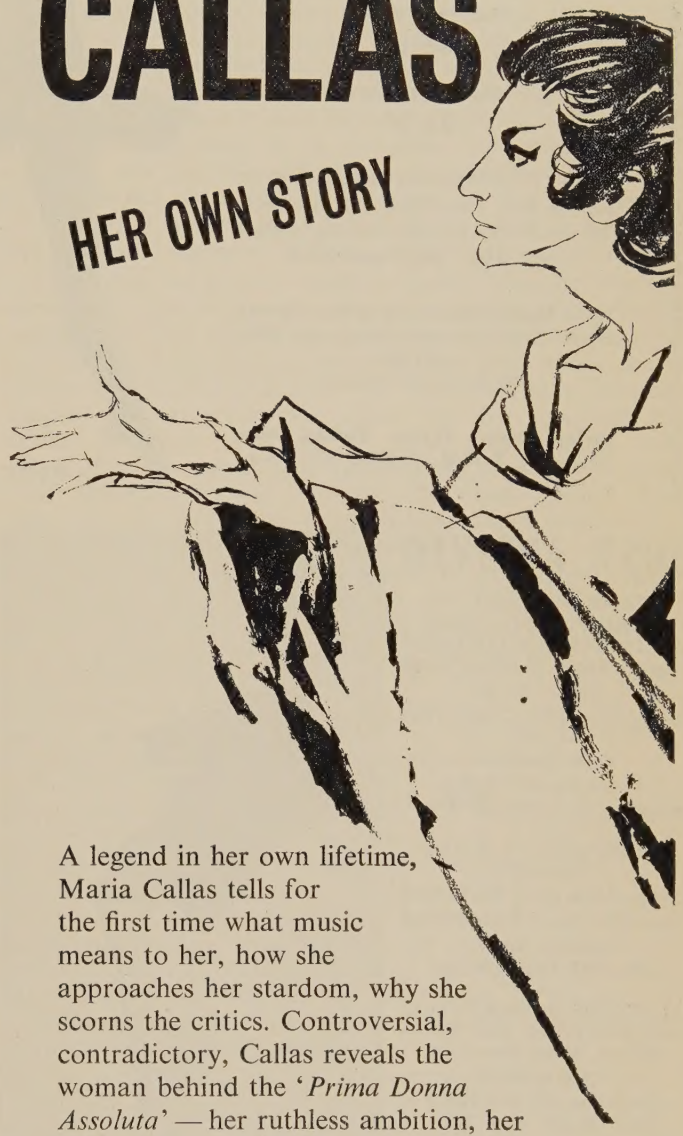

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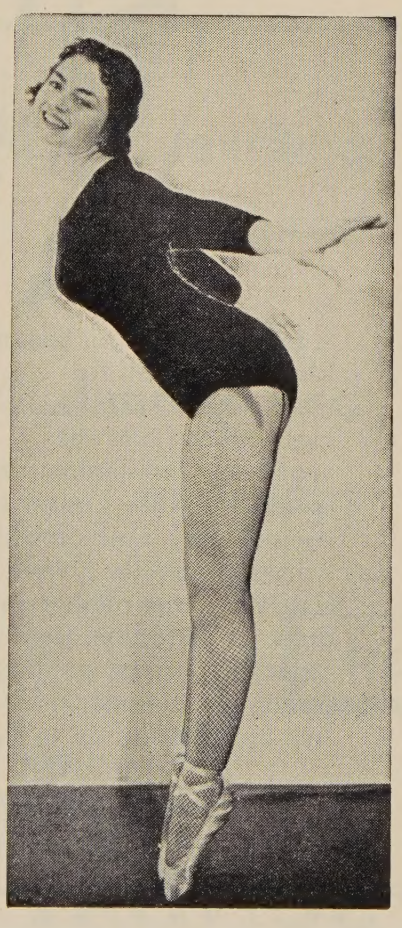

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Personality of the Month

JOHN FIELD

JOHN FIELD'S ballet-master, Henry Legerton, has recently hit upon a very happy idea of nomenclature. While both Royal Ballet companies were resident at Covent Garden recently, so as to save any unpleasant confusion, he headed the notice board for the company that for time immemorial has been known as the "junior" company, with a new, more flattering and, indeed, more accurate title. He called it "the smaller company". It's a good name and one which we might *try* (although the habit of years dies hard) to adopt. In any event the new name is well-deserved, for the "smaller" company has had an extraordinarily successful season. A great deal of that success must be accredited to Legerton himself, and a great deal more goes to the company's executive director, John Field.

When John Field took over the smaller company, some five or six years ago, it was still for all practical purposes the old Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. During the period of his responsibility he has had to work towards a complete change of status — the formation of a *second* Covent Garden company. The difficulties he faced were enormous, and more than once failure must have looked him very searchingly in the face. Critics — us very much included — were not always kind, and justifiably because some of the performances this company gave were uncomfortably below Royal Ballet par. However, Field, his director, Dame Ninette, and their many helpers, rightly refused to be discouraged. Now it seems they have more or less won through, and their problems (such as more dancers, better and more orchestral players, the right to plan a programme not *completely* dominated by box office considerations) are fundamentally not for them but for the Covent Garden management for whom they work.

Where Field has been a notably fine leader is in his remarkable encouragement of talent. Many, many dancers have flourished under his vice-consulship, and the company's standard of male dancing is gratifyingly high. (As someone once said: "In this company the men dance like *men*," to which the unfortunate reply came: "Yes, and so do the *women*" — but at least this is a step in the right direction.) The building of the repertory has not been his prime responsibility, but there can be no doubt that the company is in this respect stronger than ever before. Field has served a hard apprenticeship, taking the company to Australia, South Africa and the British provinces. Now he might be thought to have proved himself, and it may well be that British ballet will have to look no further for the man to be Ashton's right-hand, when the time comes — as it must — for the present Associate Director to assume full control.

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Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

What do they want?

EVERYONE is entitled to his or her opinion and the complete freedom to express honest views by English critics is something that is preciously guarded and would be fought for if necessary. But some of the critical opinions on Ashton's most recent work for the Royal Ballet — *Les Deux Pigeons* — show an inconsistency that is disturbing. Nobody could say that this enchanting work, adored by almost every strata of the paying public that has so far seen it, was hailed by wild critical acclaim and certainly nothing to be compared with what greeted *La Fille Mal Gardée*, a ballet in something of the same genre and no wit superior. However, be that as it may, and, I repeat, people are entitled to say what they think, but what, one begins to wonder, do the critics really want?

The same lukewarm reaction greets dramatic works, neo-classic plotless works, modern works, lightweight works — in fact everything apart from recognised classics and few dare to criticise them because their merit must obviously be considerable or they would not have become classics. In Ashton's case alone the first reactions to ballets as varied as *Scènes de Ballet* and *Daphnis and Chloë* bore the same tepid relationship to what we now read about *Les Deux Pigeons*. The two former, I'm happy to say, have since been acclaimed and continue in Royal Ballet's repertory even after ten years and one only hopes that *Les Deux Pigeons* meets the same happy fate. It all makes it confusing, though, for the poor choreographer thinking up what he shall do next, and possibly the answer lies in never reading criticism at all.

Different to many countries, the critic on the daily newspaper has here to write his notice the moment the curtain descends and even then often only has about half an hour in which to write a considered criticism — an almost impossible task. Personally, I cannot imagine how anyone can write a sound criticism of a ballet as complex as, say, Ashton's full evening *Ondine* in a few hurried minutes and it is obviously this factor that leads the critic into snap judgments which he frequently has to revise after later performances. It is an unhappy state of affairs which will not be improved as long as the lords of the newspaper world continue to insist on notices appearing the following morning. On the other hand, in the case of *Les Deux Pigeons*, one or two weekly publications, where there is ample time for the critic to write a considered piece, came out with little praise for the new work.

Perhaps the time has come when critics and audiences should get together and decide just *what* they really want to see, then at least we shall know — even if nobody takes any notice.

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LASSITUDE: The Young Man (Christopher Gable) after having tried to paint the Young Girl (Lynn Seymour) finds that he is uninspired and bored. A moment in the early part of Act 1. *Photo: Dominic.*

Les Deux Pigeons

A ballet in two acts and three scenes based on the fable by La Fontaine by Henry Régnier and Louis Mérante. First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden on February 14, 1961. Choreography by Frederick Ashton. Music by André Messager. Designed by Jacques Dupont.

The Young Man ..... CHRISTOPHER GABLE
The Young Girl ..... LYNN SEYMOUR
His Mother ..... SHIRLEY BISHOP
A Gypsy Girl ..... ELIZABETH ANDERTON
Her Lover ..... ROBERT MEAD
A Gypsy Boy ..... JOHAAR MOSAVAL
Corps de Ballet of the Girl's Friends, Gypsies and Sightseers.

ACT I. A Studio in Paris

There were two pigeons on a tree,
Who loved each other tenderly.
One, in his folly, tired of home,
Resolved in distant lands to roam.
"Alas, what ails you?" said the other,
"You would not leave me, gentle brother?
Sure, parting is the depth of woe,
Although to you, unkind! it seems not so.
At least bethink you of the risks and cares
That are the lot of travellers."
. . . . . .
. . . *"Don't cry," said he.*
"Three days at most will give my whim its run,
And then I shall be back to tell
All my adventures one by one:
'Twill cheer you up, and be the greatest fun."

ACT II. Scene 1. A Gypsy Encampment near Paris
Scene 2. Back to the Studio

. . . . . .
With dragging wing and sagging head,
Cursing his curiosity, [our friend]
Crawled homeward by the nearest way,
And after his eventful day
Sans further peril reached the Tree
Our friends once more together!—you may guess
The joys which paid them for their past distress.

(Extracts from the Fables of Jean de la Fontaine translated by Sir Edward Marsh)

CHOREOGRAPHY

WHAT, to coin a question, is the nature of ballet? If you think ballet is a kind of play (or more subtly a kind of opera) with silent actors (or more persuasively silent singers), I don't imagine you will very much like Ashton's new ballet *Les Deux Pigeons*. If you think prose is the same as poetry, or that naturalism is the same as realism, and that only blue jeans (or is it nowadays leather jerkins?) are modern, if you believe *all* these things, then the ballet is not for you. At best you will find it rather baffling, and the evident enjoyment of the audience might well make you peevish. If by any foul mischance you should find yourself at Covent Garden when they are actually performing *Les Deux Pigeons*, I would seriously advise you to fly at once. If you don't, all could easily be discovered, because I have a feeling that this ballet can act as a litmus paper to taste. Mind you, whether you are supposed to turn pink or blue must be a matter of opinion.

The first version of *Les Deux Pigeons* was originally given at the Paris Opéra on October 18, 1886, with choreography by Louis Mérante, the choreographer of *Sylvia*. It was Mérante's last ballet, for he died shortly afterwards, and to judge from the account of it given in Cyril Beaumont's *Complete Book of Ballets*, sounds rather grim.

Officially the scenario, by one Henry Régnier, had been based on the fable by La Fontaine, officially but not very noticeably. It took place in 18th-century Thessaly, and the characters had names like Gourouli, Pepio, Djali, Zarifi, and, my personal favourite, Franca-Trippa. The ballet, which was full of incident, told how Pepio ran away from his fiancée, Gourouli, to experience Life in a nearby gypsy encampment, where a gypsy girl, Djali, had caught his fancy. Gourouli follows him and, disguised in a black wig as one of the gypsies, excites his passion. Pepio is then caught in a severe thunderstorm, and after some unfortunate adventures returns home drenched to the skin. Gourouli, who has slipped off earlier, is waiting up for him, one can only hope with a hot bath.

Here I have been flippant about what was doubtless in its day a delightful ballet, but its day is past and Ashton has been quick to realise it. The key to *his* version of the ballet is possibly his programme description of the work as "an allegory". He has translated the ballet into Mürger's Bohemian Paris, and transformed his hero and heroine into an artist and his model. The gypsies have been retained, but the girl no longer follows her lover to their encampment, and is left waiting for him until the young man returns, disillusioned,

contrite and full of a newly mature tenderness.

This simple parable could be reduced to the literary terms of a cracker motto — "True love never did run smooth" or even "North, South, East or West, wher'ere you roam, home is best." Fortunately we are not dealing with literature but with ballet, and to call the theme "sentimental" cannot, in my submission, have much relevance unless the choreography were by analogy of that quality normally associated with sentimental art. This, I cannot feel to be the case. Indeed, let me immediately go further, and say that choreographically I think *Les Deux Pigeons* might even be Ashton's finest achievement to date, although this is a slightly different thing from saying it is his finest ballet.

Ashton's theme of acceptance and deepening love through experience has, it seems to me, a validity for us today (a contemporary significance, if you prefer that way of putting it) although it is unmodish in its optimism. (Here, I am tempted to compare the theme with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* — and I would not altogether be teasing. Imagine the Osborne play reduced to the essentials of its myth. Think of that passage of the lovers' conversation about "bears and squirrels" — which first fell on our ears with the thump of truth — and imagine it translated into ballet.) The point, surely, is that made by Ulanova, when she wrote : "While I favour greatly present-day themes, new ballet does not necessarily presuppose a contemporary setting and a modern theme."

Ashton in *Les Deux Pigeons* gives us three allegorical characters (treated completely realistically) and sets them against a non-realistic decorative background of Degas ballet-girls and swirling gypsies. In a sense the background is as important as the symbolic figures who inhabit it, but its importance almost entirely rests on its beauty and validity as spectacle, and has little or no part to play in the ballet's drama. Someone has already pointed out that the work could well be reduced simply to a *pas de trois.* And this is perfectly true, it could, much in the same way as one can pick out the tunes of a symphony on a penny-whistle.

Ashton seems to be getting increasingly fond of what might be called the "background-with-allegorical-figures" ballet and in this I personally think he is pointing one of the most profitable paths for ballet to take in the future. There are many viable kinds of ballet (the dance-drama, the comedy ballet, the plotless ballet, etc.) but the particular advantage of a work such as *Les Deux Pigeons* is that it can combine many of the virtues of the dance-drama with those of the plotless ballet. A certain disadvantage is that the inevitable confusion of narrative styles — even though the ballet itself is given overall unity through its choreography — will be disconcerting to anyone expecting the logical narrative development one encounters in a well-made play. Any fool giving the matter a moment's thought can realise that strictly speaking Ashton is breaking basic rules of dramatic construction. The question to be asked is whether these transgressions result in gains or losses. Let me give an example.

The first act of *Les Deux Pigeons* opens with a young boy and a young girl in love. He is supposed to be a painter and she is his model, but Ashton does not seem to insist on this very closely as the fact of him being a painter is an artistic convenience and has little bearing on the allegory. (He might just as well have been a bus conductor, although a ballet set on top of a double-decker bus would look crowded to say the least.) These two young people are shown with considerable delicacy and care, their easy-going relationship, growing bored round the edges, is depicted by dancing that is completely articulate. This is realistic. Suddenly for no discernible dramatic reason an old woman enters following close on the pretty heels of a troupe of ballet girls. This scene is not realistic. Later still, a horde of dusky gypsies descend upon the party, and this is hardly realistic either. But here is no error of judgment on Ashton's part, but a deliberately flimsy construction so that descriptive and spectacular dance can coexist in the same ballet. If you think about it rather than watch it, the story is superficially silly, but fundamentally the allegory touches the heart, while the vivid background excites the senses.

Sooner or later most choreographers just seem to dry up, and it's more often sooner than later. They reach a point when at best they are only able to repeat pale

PAINTER AND MODEL: The Young Girl (Seymour) and the Young Man (Gable) in the pas de deux *from Act 1 in which they express their slightly disturbed affection for each other.* *Photos (left) Houston Rogers, (right) Dominic.*

LOVE MAKING WITH FRIENDS: The pas de deux *is interrupted by the arrival of the Young Girl's friends. Above, Seymour dances with her friends using movements that imitate the flapping of pigeon's wings. Below, the two lovers resume their* pas de deux *until they are interrupted by the arrival of some itinerant gypsies.*
Photos: Houston Rogers.

copies of their past successes, and the inspiration needed for original creation seems to be lost. Ashton, however, appears to go on for ever, and what is more, he does not just go on, but, like Balanchine, his work is continually developing. When he created *Ondine,* which *The Times* the other day so aptly called "his concerto for Fonteyn", it might have been thought that he had reached the eventual end of his choreographic line. Now he must have got his second wind (or is it his third, fourth or fifth ?) and *Ondine* far from being the end of the line, starts to look like a fresh beginning. With this work, *La Fille Mal Gardée* and now *Les Deux Pigeons,* Ashton has shown, admittedly to varying degrees in each ballet, a deeper sense of characterisation, a fresher dance invention and what amounts to a new style of *concertante* choreography, that had previously been only foreshadowed in one-act works such as *Symphonic Variations, Scènes de Ballet* and *Daphnis and Chloë.*

In this new maturity Ashton is, in my opinion, very possibly building the British classic repertory for the next century — doing here and now something similar to what Bournonville did for the Royal Danish Ballet a hundred years ago.

The rôles of the Young Boy and the Young Girl — the two pigeons of the title — are exquisitely conceived. The Girl's part is playful and delicate, tender and touching. It is also important to notice how the character is developed from the first act to the second, so that the adorably tantalising tease of the first scene changes into the mature young woman in the final scene of the reunion with her lover. This implicit contrast between an adolescent and an adult relationship is strangely moving.

However, the central rôle of the ballet is not given to the Girl, but to the Young Man, and this in itself should perhaps be noted in passing as something of a new departure for British ballet. Once again, the character is simple, even in a sense conventional, but carefully drawn by the choreography. His restlessness, wanderlust and mild discontent are lightly but surely sketched in. His infatuation for the Gypsy Girl, which flares up in the following scene to a youthfully exultant blaze, his dismay and humiliation at his rejection, his contriteness on returning to the Young Girl, and finally the fresh assurance of his

new-found old love are all cleverly written into the part. Nor do I mean — and now I am speaking of both the principal rôles — that Ashton has merely told his dancers here to act sad and there to act happy, for the character and situation has been put into the actual movements.

The first scene with the Girl fidgeting with boredom while she poses on her chair, demonstrates what I mean, for the wriggles are not acted but danced, and the playful scene that follows is carried out in a marvellously executed series of quick and vivid little dance-images. Here, Ashton has based his dance-images largely on naturalistic gesture, but the boy's solo of contrition after his expulsion from the gypsy camp is made from classical steps combined with the broad metaphorical gestures of grief, supplication and hope.

The third of the characters is perforce less interesting, if only because the Gypsy Girl does not develop, and is really only an incident — the *other* woman — in the lives of the central characters. She is something of an Odile to the Young Girl's Odette, and she has been given appropriately brilliant and tough dancing to contrast with the warm lyricism allotted to her stay-at-home rival. This characteristic *fille fatale,* nevertheless, emerges as a real personality, and, in a sub-plot as it were, the not uninteresting relationship between herself and her Gypsy Lover is briefly yet quite carefully explored.

The Gypsy Lover himself is the least rewarding of the principal rôles, chiefly because his characterisation is left much more to gesture than to dancing. Most of the time he is called upon to do little more than seethe and glower on the touchlines to the action, and when he is given some admittedly vigorous dancing in the first act it is merely a solo flourish within an *ensemble.* Even in the dramatically more important part he plays in the second act *pas de trois* he naturally has to be overshadowed by the Gypsy Girl and the Young Man.

This *pas de trois* — with the Gypsy Girl all voluptuous enticement, the Young Man all breathless ardour, and the Gypsy Lover all proud resentment — is perhaps typical of the way in which Ashton is using dance to illuminate the story. Two even better examples occur in the first act. When the Young Girl puts her hands on her hips and gently fans her elbows to and fro, simulating bird movements (this *motif* is later picked up by the *corps),* the Young Man first watches her with momentary amusement, and then, joins in as if playing a lovers' game. (These particular avian flutterings are rather similar, incidentally, to the ones used by MacMillan in *House of Birds.)*

This section of the choreography is full of indications of bird movement, including a "cooing" *pas de deux,* which is gentle and affectionate. This little game (so reminiscent of Osborne's "bears and squirrels") is wonderfully true to life, and interestingly Ashton has developed it from a hint to be found in the original scenario. The other obvious example of descriptive choreography comes after the Gypsy Girl has appeared on the scene. She tries to dazzle the Young Man with her dancing, and the Young Girl, not to be outshone engages her in a sort of choreographic duel. The Gypsy dances a phrase, and immediately the Young Girl imitates her, then the Gypsy goes one better, with once again the Girl defiantly attempting to hold her own, and so the duel continues until eventually the combatants are left glaring

IMITATION AND ABANDONMENT: Above, Lynn Seymour, as the Young Girl, dances a solo variation. Below, she is left disconsolate as the curtain falls on Act 1. Photos: (above) Houston Rogers, (below) Dominic.

GYPSY ENCAMPMENT: One of the many original dances that Frederick Ashton has devised for Act 2, scene 1. Unfortunately the photographs give no idea of the beautiful colours of Dupont's costumes. *Photo: Houston Rogers.*

at one another before being separated by the Young Man. Both girls are dancing the same choreography in turn, yet the nuance given it is quite different, so that the Gypsy looks provocative and abandoned, while the Young Girl for all her amusingly belligerent efforts continues to look deliciously wholesome and lost. This sweetly humorous scene is an absolute gem.

So far, I have perhaps given little idea of the humour of the ballet, and much of the first scene is appealingly funny. Nor, for that matter, have I given much idea of the ballet's bravura brilliance and this is possibly an even more important strand in the choreography. Part of this brilliance is to be found in the dancing for the principals, but even more the impression of brilliance is left for the *ensemble.*

The dancing of the Young Girl's Friends, eight charming *petits rats,* is youthful and delicate — capturing, I imagine, something of the high-spirited gaiety of Ashton's early work for the Ballet Club, *Foyer de Danse,* a now lost ballet I can only judge from Madame Rambert's film. These dances get *Les Deux Pigeons* off to a good start, yet hardly prepare the audience for the tremendous Gypsy dances, which are among the most exciting things I have ever seen in ballet, comparable with the Tartar dances of *The Fountains of Bakhchiserai.*

In these Gypsy dances, which are completely unauthentic, Ashton has adapted a few Hungarian *czardas* steps, and invented a whole lot more. What he has evoked to a remarkable extent is the *feel* of national dancing, and yet he has kept these dances completely within the ballet's choreographic framework. In the first scene they are allotted to an *ensemble* consisting of the Gypsy Girl and eight men, and male dancing predominates even in the second scene, where a larger *ensemble* of twelve men and twelve women is used.

The amazingly rich orchestration of these dances, their flash and fury, their sheer originality and technical embroidery are, to my mind, quite astonishing — almost as astonishing as the generally unfavourable critical attitude to them. Perhaps, unbeknown to myself, I am going quietly mad, but I am at a loss to understand the patronising attitude so many of my colleagues have adopted towards the character dances. Of course, these passages can be said — not that I would personally say it — to be life seen through rose-coloured spectacles, but the spectacles are, at the very least, immensely spectacular.

There are one or two things I would change. I wonder, for example, whether the Old Lady in the first scene is very useful (I see she is described in the programme as the Young Man's Mother, but really she might just as well be Whistler's Mother for all the part she plays in the ballet). The bourgeois tourists at the beginning of the Gypsy scene look and behave a little bit too much like a few stray Philistines left over from *Carnaval.* And this emphasises my general point that while one can accept — in this particular kind of ballet — dancers being improbably incorporated into the background dance pattern, I think ill-defined mime rôles strike, perhaps illogically but in my case quite forcibly, a discordant note.

Perhaps it is that one instinctively expects naturalism from mimes, but only the deeper realism from dancers. In this connection it might be worth considering the varying movement-styles found in *Petrushka,* where, for example, the general crowd are treated naturalistically, whereas the Coachmen, Grooms and Wet Nurses are treated realistically — and, as a consequence, they all merge together unnoticeably. This is only a conjecture, but I do feel that Ashton could with advantage tighten up the production at this juncture.

This is a very minor point. My other criticism, not quite so minor, concerns the beating up of the Young Man in the gypsy encampment. Here again it is a matter of production. The introduction of the rope dance (which, apart from the pigeon-play in the first act, is the only extraneous idea Ashton has adapted from the original scenario) seems rather too formal a device in that particular scrimmage.

To sum up such a wonderfully rich work as *Les Deux Pigeons* is far from

easy. However, were I to be asked just why I regard it so highly, I think I would point to its marvellously sustained quality of youthfulness, its pure dance invention (and I don't here mean dance-gimmicks, but much more the unceasing flow of memorable dancing that even Ashton himself has hardly ever matched) and finally the humanity and compassion that sweeps through so much of the ballet, eventually brimming over in the last *pas de deux* — that evocation of youthful love that seems to crystallise all of Ashton's previous thoughts on the love duet.

However, let me sound one warning note —and that a note of music, by definition intrusive in this column. Ashton has found a rich new vein of choreography for himself, a new style first seen in *La Fille Mal Gardée* that might be called lyrical bravura, and a new *"concertante"* form of ballet construction first seen fully in *Ondine*. He has created a remarkable trilogy, yet, in my opinion, *Ondine* is seriously (perhaps, who can say? irredeemably) flawed by its score, *La Fille Mal Gardée* will only gladden the hearts of musicians by its ingenuity and unpretentious good nature, and in *Les Deux Pigeons* although the banal music has certain danceable charms, those charms may wear thinner than the choreography. Here, I suggest, is a problem for the future.

DANCING

IN my experience good ballets are almost always well danced (if only the converse were also true) and *Les Deux Pigeons* is no exception. Apart from the early *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales,* this was Ashton's first work for the Royal Ballet's second company, and for that matter the first ever multi-act to be created for them. Particularly in that it followed on from the wildly successful *La Fille Mal Gardée, Les Deux Pigeons* was a formidable responsibility for its young dancers. They honoured it magnificently.

Twenty-year-old Christopher Gable, filling in at the last moment for the flu-stricken Donald Britton, had a particular triumph in a rôle that was not primarily intended for him. Yet nothing in his dancing, not a single hesitation or infelicity, indicated that he was a mere understudy. On the contrary, his acting, dancing and partnering were all masterly. He has — as he had shown previously both in *The Invitation* and *Swan Lake* — the priceless ability to project a strong, credible and well-defined character on stage. This, coupled with the unusual strength of his technique and his powerful masculine presence, made this a most memorable début. This young man has all the makings of a great dancer.

Lynn Seymour shares so many of Gable's qualities that they seem a natural partnership, which one is tempted to predict could one day be historic. Ashton has given her a marvellous rôle, and she is enchanting in it. It exploits her warmth, tenderness and girlish womanliness. It also brings out the gentle, wry humour that she gave hints of when she danced the lead in *Solitaire*. Like Fonteyn and Nerina before her, she has succeeded in drawing something new out of Ashton, something typically Ashton yet individual to herself, and her dancing has never looked so lustrous.

The biggest surprise of the first-night cast was Elizabeth Anderton's excellent Gypsy Girl. Here was something of the elevation and physical bite of Nerina, and her always intelligent acting was superb. Robert Mead as her Lover was a good deal less convincing at the first performance, although as the ballet got run-in he improved in his manner, and more importantly his presence. His actual dancing was lithe and exhilarating, while Johaar Mosaval also made the most of his chances in the dances in the second act.

The whole company's characteristically vigorous dance style was severely tested by the ballet and passed with literally flying colours. With the Gypsy dances in particular, these youngsters gave of their very best as if determined that no one was ever again going to call them "junior". People will, of course, but there will be no offence in it.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

THE revival of *Ondine* a couple of weeks after the première of *Les Deux Pigeons* suggested a possible reason why Ashton should have turned first to Hérold (in *La Fille Mal Gardée)* and then to Messager for the music of his next two ballets. Henze's score for *Ondine* is, to my mind, the least successful feature of an otherwise superb ballet ; it intrudes on Ashton's choreographic imagination without doing much to enhance it. Small wonder that he should be content with music less obtrusive and somewhat more decorative in an altogether different way, although it smacks more than a little of taking the easy way out.

At least Messager's score has the advantage over Hérold's of being entirely original, instead of borrowing shamelessly from Italian opera as *La Fille Mal Gardée* does. *Les Deux Pigeons* was André Messager's *entrée* to the Paris Opéra, a commission obtained for him through the influence of his teacher, Saint-Saëns. (According to Ivor Guest, the ballet has the historical distinction of being the first to be rehearsed to piano accompaniment instead of the violin and viola formerly used.) Twenty years after its première, the composer was in directorial control of the opera house he had earlier found it so difficult to penetrate.

Messager's reputation rests chiefly on his long series of operettas, of which perhaps the most outstanding were *La Basoche* (1890), *Madame Chrysanthème*

GYPSY ENCHANTMENT : The Gypsy Girl (Elizabeth Anderton) uses all her charm on the Young Man (Christopher Gable) who is momentarily carried away by her fascination. *Photos : Houston Rogers.*

DISENCHANTMENT: Having showed his ardour to the Gypsy Girl, the Young Man finds himself face to face with her Gypsy Lover. A fight ensues and the Young Man is thrown out of the encampment after some rough handling. Disconsolate he starts on his journey homeward until suddenly a pigeon alights on his hand and he is reminded of the girl at home whom he really always loved. Photo: Dominic

(1893) and, above all, *Véronique* (1898), a contemporary "hit" in London and the U.S.A. as well as in Paris. Messager, in fact, was the heir to Offenbach, whose satirical *opéras-bouffes* had gone out of fashion with the advent of the Third Republic, in favour of the surface charm and entertainment which Messager knew so well how to supply.

Operettas like those I have mentioned revealed Messager's undoubted elegance of taste and sensitive skill within his somewhat narrow limitations as a composer. Of his other ballets I know nothing, but to put *Les Deux Pigeons* in the same category as those of Delibes and Lalo, as some writers have done, is stretching musical indulgence a bit far.

The music of *Sylvia, Coppélia* and *Namouna* (used by Lifar for *Suite en Blanc)* does have some pretensions towards a symphonic style, later so effectively exploited by the Russian ballet composers. *Les Deux Pigeons* is entirely melody and accompaniment, belonging to the rather better sort of Victorian palm-courtery, and without any of the harmonic subtleties sometimes to be found in the operettas. Its attempts at "character" scenes, like the *Orage* and *Danse Hongroise,* sound feeble and vapid even in the revised orchestration.

John Lanchbery, who has to some extent re-orchestrated the music for the Ashton version, has made the most of an ungrateful task. He has even managed to make the scene-change music in the second act and the following *finale* carry some emotional weight by the judicious use of woodwind colour and expressive *legato* phrasing. Otherwise the shallow charm and general emptiness of the score calls for no critical comment except to record that it was given a spirited performance by an orchestra which could play it equally well standing on its head. The only danger with music of this sort is that the players might look on it as a virtual night off and treat it accordingly.

Ashton, however, has made a number of changes in the sequence of the music compared with older versions. I have looked at the new score in conjunction with what is described on its title page as the *version définitive* used when Messager revived it at the Paris Opéra in 1912. One major difference is that the 1912 score has no provision for a return to the opening scene at the end — the ballet ends with the storm and a reconciliation in or near the gypsy encampment. It is not clear where the additional music in Ashton's *finale* has come from — some probably from the 1906 version used when Messager himself produced it at Covent Garden during his five years as artistic director of the "Royal London Opera", and some is perhaps a neat pastiche by Lanchbery for linking purposes.

A comparative table of the 1912 and 1916 musical sequence is given below. Except for two small cuts in the *Pas des Deux Pigeons* the first act is the same. The second act is shorn of its prelude in the current version, and also of two numbers originally marking the entry of Soldiers and a Magistrate, characters not introduced by Ashton. The *Entrée de Gourouli* now becomes the *ensemble* for the gypsy girls, and the *Entrée des jeunes filles* a *pas de trois* for the Young Man and the Gypsy Girl and Boy.

The Gypsy Girl's *pas seul* is danced to the music of what was formerly Gourouli's *variatión,* while the *Tzigane seule* number becomes the Young Man's solo (twice repeated) — strange transmutations of character! Indeed, the fact that Ashton has made this double switch might argue a scant respect for the composer's intentions, but the fact that it proves choreographically effective in performance is, to me, the strongest single argument against any intrinsic musical worth in the score as such. Otherwise some discrepancy in musical and choreographic character would immediately be apparent.

Remaining changes are slight. There is a small cut in the *Valse,* and it is intriguing to find an *Andante* formerly used much earlier in the act now incorporated into the *finale* where, in Lanchbery's orchestration, it provides the most memorably expressive melody of the lot. In the following table the descriptive titles are those appearing in the scores; the numbering I have added myself for convenience of reference:

Paris 1912	**Covent Garden 1961**
1. *Introduction*	Same
2. *Entrée de Mikalia*	do.
3. *Entrée de Pepio*	do.
4. *Pas des deux Pigeons*	2 small cuts
5. *Scene*	Same
6. *Entrée des Tziganes*	do.
7. *Scene*	do.
8. *Theme and Variations*	do.
9. *Scene*	do.
Act II	
10. *Prelude*	CUT
11. *Scene/Entrée*	Same
12. *Entrée des soldats*	CUT
13. *Entrée de Gourouli*	Same (but Gypsy Girls *ensemble*)
14. *Entrée des jeunes filles*	Same (but *pas de trois)*
15. *Entrée du syndic*	CUT
Divertissement	
16. *Entrée*	Same
17. *Andante*	Gypsy Girl solo (No. 19)
18. *Valse*	Young Man solo (No. 20)
19. *Gourouli Varn*	Valse (No. 18)
20. *Tzigane seule*	Danse Hongroise (No. 21)
21. *Danse Hongroise*	Finale (No. 22)
22. *Finale*	Orage (No. 23)
23. *Orage*	Scene-change (additional)
24. *Conclusion*	Le retour (additional), incorporating No. 17, Andante.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

WHY does Ashton have to look across the English Channel for his designers? This is the disgruntled question that has been heard from some of the more Anglophile of our ballet audiences, from the overlooked amongst Britain's designing hopefuls and even from those more closely connected with the Covent Garden and Royal Ballet organizations. The answer is sadly simple. There is a type of ballet which evokes another century that appears to be completely beyond the capabilities of the British designer. Well, perhaps not beyond the capabilities but certainly beyond the restricted boundary of British designers' taste.

Just for a moment, look back at Ashton's two previous major works which Ashton has created for the Royal Ballet:

Ondine: Italian designer, Lila di Nobili. Settings of magnificence in a remarkably limited range of colour but with an immense range of tones. Costumes slightly less successful but never destroying the lithographic texture and atmosphere that

was quite essential to this poetic marriage of a Romantic story to a modern score. The only other designer who could have equalled what Lila di Nobili achieved would have been Pavel Tchelitchev, who magnificently designed for Giroudoux's play of the same name, but he was dead.

La Fille Mal Gardée: British designer, Osbert Lancaster. A brilliant cartoonist who brought about a designing disaster of leaden-handed humour and with a colour sense as subtle as that seen in children's comics. Not even this succeeded in seriously damaging what has turned out to be one of the biggest hits the Royal Ballet ever had.

After this it was hardly to be wondered that for *Les Deux Pigeons,* Ashton should turn again to Europe, and in Jacques Dupont he found one of the finest designers in France today.

Dupont's work was first seen in England in *Quatuor* for the Miskovitch company at Sadler's Wells. But his most impressive work has been in what he did for *Les Amants de Teruel* when Ludmilla Tcherina's company came to the Cambridge Theatre. In this ballet, a work otherwise of no consequence whatsoever, Dupont showed an awareness of beauty in the texture of everyday things — of soot eating away stone, of train smoke throwing its patterning upon a railway bridge. Into the fabric of this background, Dupont wove the muted and subtle colours of his costumes so that each became a part of the other and not apart from the other as so often happens with the costumes and settings of many designers. It was the designing of this ballet that made Ashton think that Dupont would be suitable for *Les Deux Pigeons* and his perception has proved to a brush hair's breadth to be right.

In spite of the story's simplicity, the ballet is an extremely difficult one to design and possibly it has been made no easier by Ashton moving the environment from Mediterranean Thessaly to the artists' quarter of Paris during "La Belle Epoque". This sea change was dictated to Ashton by the nature of Messager's score which reeked more of Paris than of sun-baked southern shores. Ashton has concentrated more on the poetic overtones of an artist's wavering affection for his charming young mistress and the interlude when he briefly turns towards an exotic gypsy girl with her attendant rout of nomads is incidental to the strong thread of artist-and-mistress theme which binds the whole slight and tenuous story together. These poetic overtones have been underlined by the painter's approach of Dupont who has brought to both his scenery and costumes a poetry all of his own.

The first scene, for instance, could have looked like any old artist studio setting for the first act of Puccini's *La Bohème* and possibly, at first glance, the shape is not startlingly original but somehow it becomes an integral part of this ballet as did, for example, almost any setting designed by Benois or Bakst for many Diaghilev works. To say that the over-riding impression of this setting is that it is in greys and mauves is to make it sound sombre and heavy—it is nothing of the sort. There is so much texture and the colours are applied in such a masterly way that the setting has an "alive" and luminous quality.

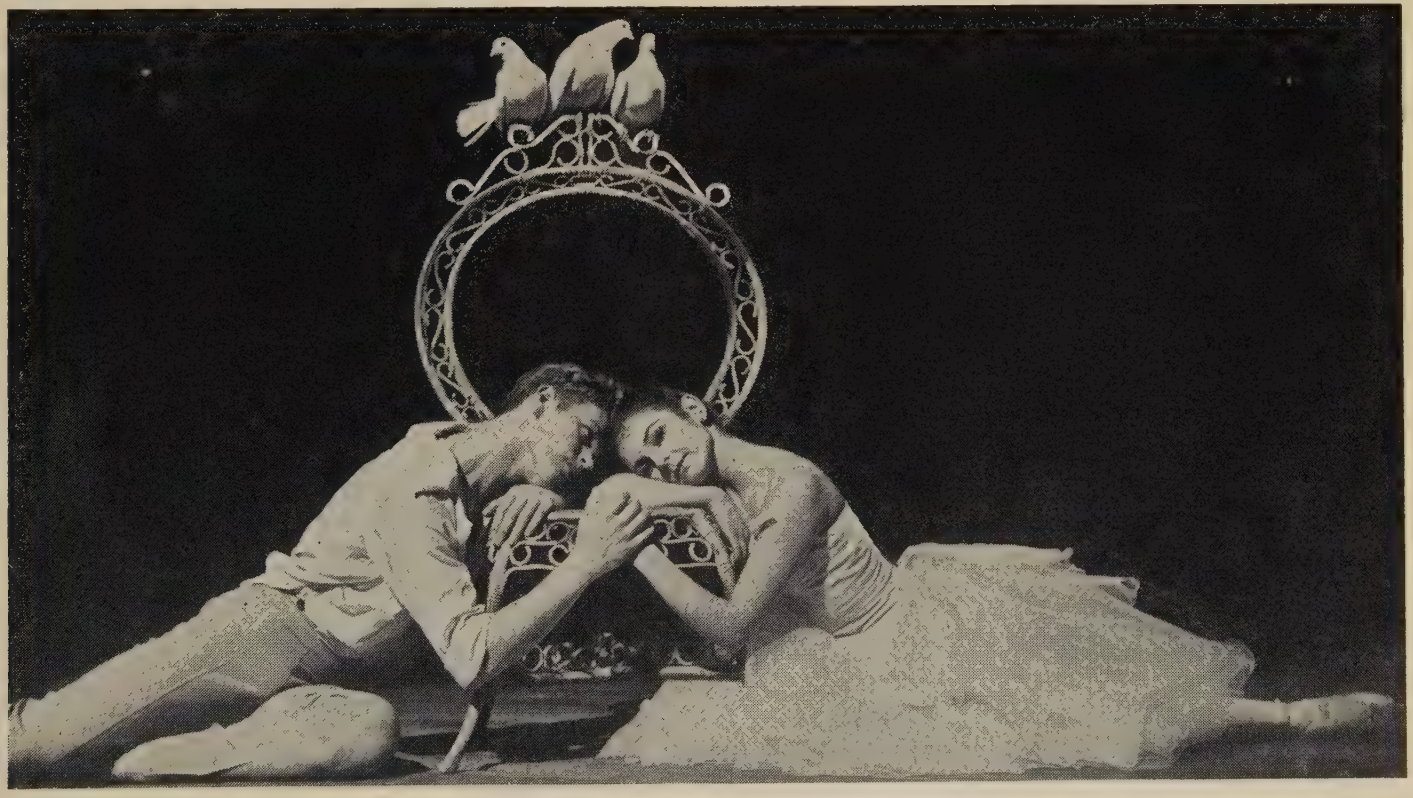
It is here that I am forced into one of those "odourous" comparisons which I dislike having to make but which gives point to what I have said about French and British designers. *Les Deux Pigeons* opens with a room, Ashton's previous ballet, *La Fille Mal Gardée,* ended with a room. For the latter, Osbert Lancaster made his stage look immensely dull and bare while not allowing an undue amount of floor-space for dancing. The light brown walls had a deadness that produced a droopy effect on the audience who were only galvanised into animation by the liveliness of the choreography and dancing. This flat treatment of colour on the stage is all too common amongst British designers who are apt to adopt the attitude that a rock, as an example, is a flat grey object to which another dimension can be given by the application of light. This wrong thinking often comes from wrong teaching by teachers who are not also painters. A rock is composed of a whole paletteful of colour — of reds, blues, mauves, whites or whatever, according to the nature of the rock — which when bathed in light throws back a sense of grey, but a grey that is live as a faceted diamond. A flat colour absorbs light like blotting paper, greedily eating it up and giving back nothing.

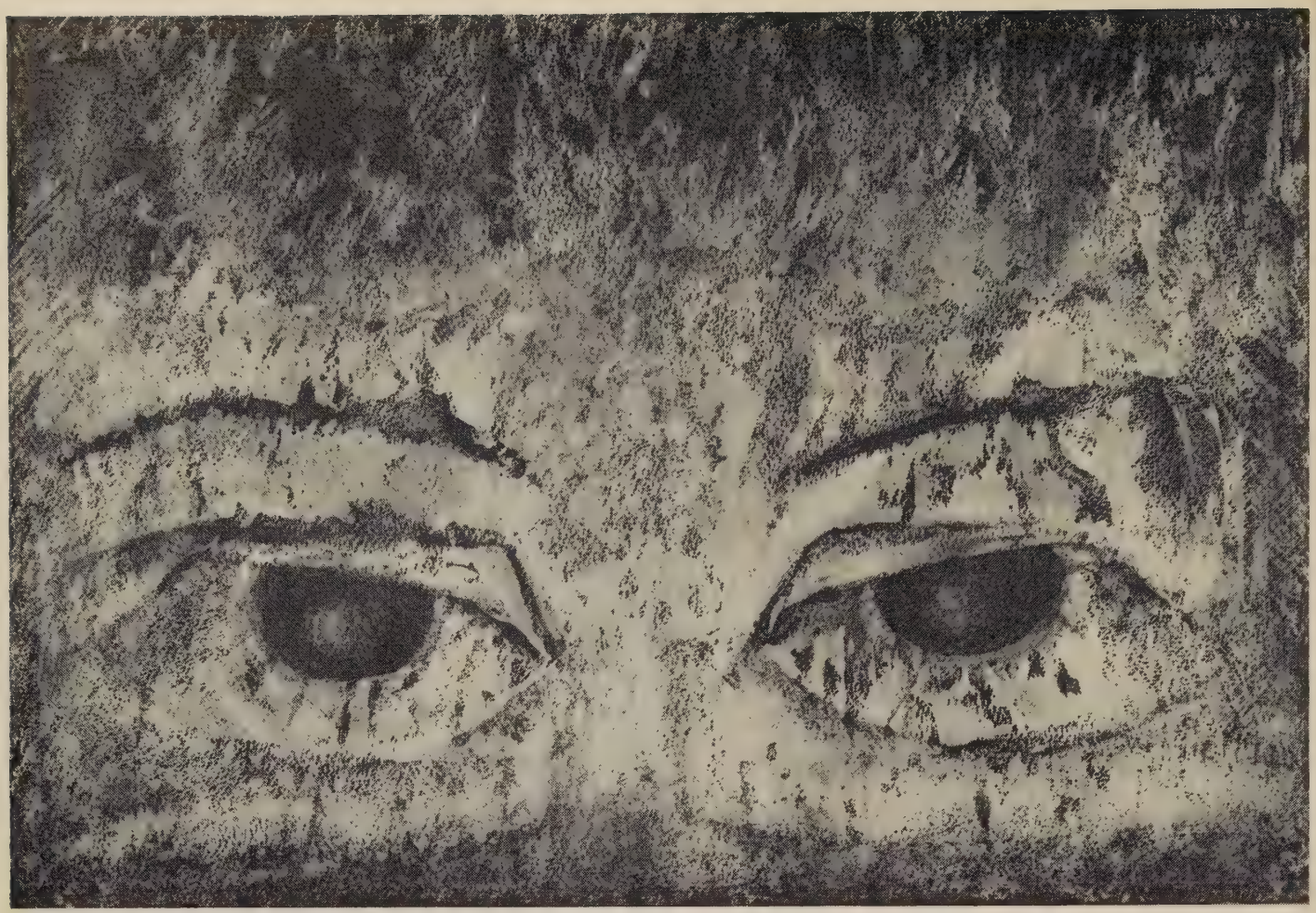
Dupont in his studio interior has, by an ingenious use of skylights, studio windows and cleverly arranged angles, managed to make his stage appear not to overpower the dancers even when only two of them are alone on it, in addition to creating a room of plausible dimensions as well as giving a maximum space for dancing. The almost impressionistic view of Paris roofs through the windows was beautifully painted in greys, blues and white with a slight and sensitive black outlining.

A skeletal framework, forming uprights and crossbars in the opening scene, was retained for the opening scene in the second act. Through this could be seen the groups of lighted caravans of the gypsy encampment — an admirable conception in the same muted colours. Between the two scenes (the last scene returns to the studio of the first act) the curtain is not lowered but gypsies manipulate, from either side of the stage, a huge wooden fence which, when it meets, forms a front curtain. It also provides a lesson in scene painting.

continued on page 17

HAPPY ENDING: Returning to his studio, the Young Man (Gable) finds the Young Girl (Lynn Seymour) waiting and forgiving. They resume their love-making in one of Ashton's most lyrical pas de deux, *while the pigeons also follow the example of the human beings.* *Photo: Dominic.*





DROP CURTAIN: A drop curtain executed in shades of red and black and designed by the famous Italian designer, Franco Laurenti, for The Demon. *This ballet, by Aurel Milloss, uses Hindemith music.* *Photo: Marchiori.*

Ballet in Italy

(Part 2)

by ADRIAAN H. LUIJDJENS

In his first article, published in our March issue, Adriaan H. Luijdjens (founder and editor of the Italian ballet magazine, Balletto) **wrote about the various companies in Italy. This month he discusses the work of various choreographers and also the principal dancers working in Italy today.**

BEFORE speaking about the dancers, let us examine the choreographic picture in Rome. Before and after the first Milloss period (1938-43), Boris Romanov worked a good deal at the Opera. Of his ballets staged before 1938 none remain, but he had an important comeback in 1953 and 1954. He mounted with considerable artistry first *Casse-Noisette* and, a year later, *The Sleeping Beauty*. His choreography, however, was in many points very different from what is elsewhere regarded to be not far from the original. I well remember how *Casse-Noisette* started with a view of what looked like an alchemist's den, where Drosselmeyer with large gestures and magic jumps confectioned his puppets, among them the Nutcracker. And then, of course, followed the children's party scene with the Christmas tree. Though Romanov, who in his youth had been a régisseur at the Maryinsky, stuck to his opinion that this was the real and original choreography, others maintained a different view. The fact remains that the beautiful music of Act 1 was very well used and there was much more real dancing than is usual.

But the great man in Rome has been Aurel (Aurelio) Milloss. With interruptions he has been engaged by the Opera from 1938 to the present day and every year he has created four or five new works. And he has also made ballets for the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (mostly open-air spectacles in the Boboli Gardens) and in summer often travels with a group all through Sicily to give performances in ancient Greek theatres and in front of classic temples, his output is obviously enormous. And he may well have over a hundred works to his name. An evening of Milloss ballets will always be satisfactory in some way. His choreography is extremely musical, though not in the same sense as with Balanchine, for Milloss tends to couple some movement to every single note of music.

This makes him a very satisfactory choreographer in *allegro,* whereas in *adage* he does not always succeed in conveying the sense of rest and relaxation. The patterns of his *ensembles* are complex, but interesting to follow. Milloss often uses the music and scenario of some work already created, such as *Prometheus* for which Beethoven supplied the music to Viganò, or (and this is a controversial work) *Petrushka,* concerning which he maintains that Fokine did not resolve well the mass fair-ground scenes, quoting evidence from Stravinsky's autobiography, or *La Jarre,* to the score which Casella wrote for Jean Borlin. Other masterpieces of his are *The Prodigal Son, Bacchus and Ariadne* (Roussel) and *Bolero*. But perhaps the most beautiful work of Milloss is his *Miraculous Mandarin*: the maestro knew Bartòk personally and understood his intentions. I have seen the *Mandarin* in five different productions and none of them is as convincing as that of Milloss — though the Yugoslav, Parlic, in quite a different way, gives an interesting reading of this sinister subject.

Without any doubt, Rome has in Milloss a choreographer of great merit. But so long as he is in command we shall only see Milloss ballets, for up to now he has refused the collaboration of others. This position is reversed at the Scala, where we have seen some interesting work by Ugo Dell'Ara and one very good ballet, *Sebastian* (Menotti), by Luciana Novara, who a year later created a new version of *Jeu de Cartes*.

As their names will convey little to the English reader, I'll not say too much about the dancers. But there are exceptions! London and Edinburgh now certainly know Carla Fracci, the enchanting ballerina of

the Scala. I had the pleasure of first noticing her, still rather immature, but with precocious promise, as one of the fairies in the Rodrigues *Cinderella,* in which Violette Verdy danced the name rôle. Hearing that Verdy had to leave, I remarked to Dell'Ara that in Fracci he might perhaps have a dancer well equipped for the exacting part. Dell'Ara agreed, and I left Milan sure that in a few days the Scala would have a really great ballerina. In the short time she has spent with Festival Ballet and Massine's Nervi company, she has developed remarkably, and is now quoted as being the finest of the young Italian generation.

But the Scala has another ballerina, Vera Colombo, less brilliant but more expressive, and for the moment technically superior to Fracci. Whereas the latter is as good in *demi-caractère* as in classical, Colombo is limited to the pure classical dance. Until a year ago, we had in Gilda Maiocchi an outstanding interpreter of *demi-caractère* and character rôles, though she has now left to perform as a guest artist with numerous companies. Many of her parts have been taken over by a young but extremely strong dancer, Elettra Moroni. Other dancers of promise are Fiorella Cova, Liliana Cosi and Tilde Baroni. Considering, too, that male dancing has been introduced so recently to the Scala school, it is curious that the picture there is not less encouraging. Though it must be said that until now all the outstanding male dancers are Romans by birth, and came to Milan either with Milloss or shortly after the war.

Quite prominent is the principal male dancer, Mario Pistoni. He is about 30, though looks younger, of a slight build, not much of an athlete if seen in daily life, but on the stage an extremely satisfying dancer with incredible elevation and *ballon.* His faultless technique makes him ideal for Balanchine works, though he has a wide range, and we well remember him as a very moving Petrushka and an exciting Prodigal Son. Pistoni never overplays a rôle : his every movement is guided by intelligence and dictated by his sense of music and style. For him, Massine created one of his finest works, the Gluck *Don Juan.*

His predecessor, Ugo Dell'Ara, is also Roman by birth. A very tall and gifted dancer, Dell'Ara excels in *demi-caractère.* He is, moreover, a stimulating force in Italian dance circles. For many years he has been *maître de ballet* at the Scala and he founded a ballet magazine, which after three numbers, left him with a seriously depleted bank balance. For the past two years he has been *maître de ballet* at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples, where he has been able to create opera-ballets in addition to staging his own full evening of ballet — but this only once a year. Giulio Perugini is his successor at the Scala. He is a *danseur noble,* limited to princely parts, but within those confines a very gifted and outstanding partner. Among the male soloists, Roberto Fascilla, Bruno Telloli, and Walter Venditti are quite on an international level, while Amadeo Amodi and Alfredo Caporilli must be mentioned for their promise among the younger boys.

For many years we had at Rome a ballerina, whose name might have become as well known as that of the famous dancers one reads about — Attilia Radice. She was the last prominent pupil of Cecchetti, loved her old maestro dearly and looked after him in his last year of life. To her he left as a kind of spiritual testament those beautiful words : *"Per essere buoni ballerini, occorre essere gente per bene".* Radice was the typical Italian dancer, extremely strong and well nigh acrobatic : even now her balance is phenomenal and her *ports de bras* are the extreme perfection of that attractive style which distinguishes the Italian dancer from her Russian, British, and, especially, French sisters.

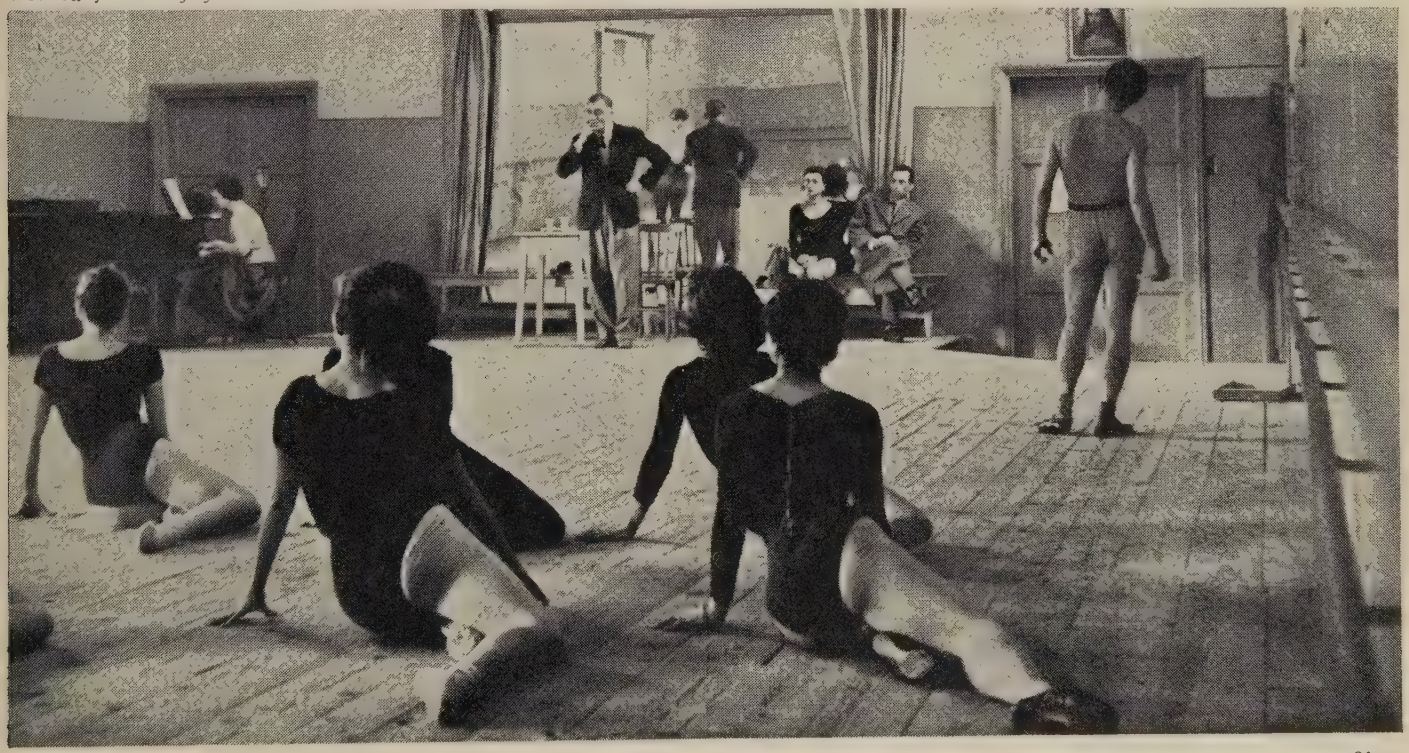
Alas, a dancer attached to any opera house, but especially to that of Rome where ballet is just tolerated, has few chances to get known. Only during the war when cultural relations were fostered with Germany and Spain did Attilia Radice get the opportunity to dance in such places as Vienna, Madrid and Munich. The war over, her "normal" life, tied to one stage, began anew. Now she is no longer dancing, but in charge of the school in Rome, where her classes are considered to be excellent.

Unfortunately, Rome has lost many of its most promising dancers. In 1956, we had a strike which was perhaps the most curious in the world — the company refused to appear in opera unless they were given more chances to appear in real ballets. The leader of this strike, Leda Roffi, long-limbed and talented, left a year later to go to Basle, and now she is with New York City Ballet. Others left too, and when Radice herself retired, she was succeeded by Marisa Matteini, who is still very young but somewhat limited to soubrette rôles.

Rome's first male dancer is Guido Lauri, a refined technician who would certainly become an even better dancer if the atmosphere in the theatre were more stimulating. One of the very best dancers, Alfredo Köllner, also left Rome to go to Basle. He was outstanding in Massine's Nervi company, especially in the danced version of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* However, we have in Walter Zappolini, a very intelligent *demi-caractère* dancer, who is now trying his hand with choreography outside the Opera.

Fortunately the great opera houses are not the only side of Italy's ballet life. We have various festivals of which the first and oldest is the Maggio Fiorentino — a great musical occasion which is held in Florence for most of May and June. It was there that a tiny number of Italians first saw the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and even Ulanova, who made her Western début on a Florentine stage. To give an idea of the ballet-mindedness of the Italian authorities, it

MILLOSS AT WORK : The choreographer, Aurel Milloss, rehearsing one of his own ballets at the Rome Opera where he has worked for many years. *Photo : Torossi.*



must be said that when this great dancer expressed a desire to also dance in Rome, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Signor Scelba, advised her that her permit to stay in Italy had expired !

Venice, too, often includes a ballet programme in its Festival of Contemporary Music. The Venetians have the distinction of being the first to invite the De Cuevas company (1954), while they have also played hosts to the Ballet Rambert and the company of the Belgrade Opera.

In October, Perugia organizes a Festival of Sacred Music, which now and then features ballet. Three years ago it was Milloss, who staged his wonderful version of *The Prodigal Son,* while it was also at Perugia in 1954 where Massine created a real masterpiece, his *Laudes Evangelii.* This is a ballet, though, of course, with much mime, which illustrates the medieval Umbrian songs about the birth and passion of Christ. Some sections, such as the killing of the innocent children by the soldiers of Herod, the shepherds coming to see the Child, and the Roman soldiers dividing the clothes of the Crucified, are completely danced. This work, which is always performed in the medieval church of San Domenico, has also been given in the church of Sainte Marie des Graces at Nantes, and in Milan's oldest church, Sant'Ambrogio. It is a spectacle which would be completely out of place in a theatre.

Other places where companies appear from time to time are Palermo and Catania, for the whole of Sicily is rather ballet-minded.

Moreover, since 1955, we have had the great international festival at Nervi, near Genoa. Its formula in the first years was to invite foreign and Italian companies to perform in the magnificent open-air theatre. Performances have included a Kabuki troupe, the Zagreb Ballet, a Markova/Miskovitch recital, the Paris Opéra Ballet, soloists from the Royal Ballet, soloists from the Royal Danish Ballet, the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Vienna Opera Ballet, London's Festival Ballet and many more. And, of course, the Scala company which gave, among other works, a remarkable performance of Massine's *Sacre du Printemps.* Mario Porcile, who was then in charge of the Festival as artistic director, did a wonderful job. In 1959, however, the pattern changed and Nervi instituted its own company, under the direction of Massine.

Finally, something about private companies in Italy. Our first company not fastened to an opera house was founded in 1954 by Pieter Van der Sloot, a Dutch dancer who had had a thorough training in various companies besides being a pupil of Préobrajenska and Kyasht. His company, called Ballet Theatre, is small and a rather precarious undertaking. But Van der Sloot is a courageous man, who manages to keep a nucleus always together, enlarging the troupe whenever he has the chance of a tour. In 1956, Dell'Ara also formed a company with pupils from his private schools in Milan and Genoa. One of his most gifted dancers was a Genoese, Paolo Bortoluzzi, a very fine dancer with a good classical technique. He distinguished himself in last year's Nervi programme, while British critics singled him out from the great mass of dancers Massine brought to Edinburgh. Now he is working in Brussels with Béjart — and still another good dancer is lost to Italy !

Of the smaller groups, there are those of Susanne Egri in Turin; in Venice, a company gathered around the teacher, Marcella Ottinelli; and in Naples, the chamber group of Valeria Lombardi, who also has the services of Grazioso Cecchetti, the son of the great maestro, as teacher.

The most promising ballet venture, however, seems to be that of the "Soloists" of the Scala under the direction of Mario Pistoni. Dancing in 1957 at Perugia the name rôle in Milloss's *Prodigal Son,* Italy's

SCALA ARTISTS: Gilda Maiocchi and Giulo Perugini, both of the company attached to the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Maiocchi now dances as guest artist with various other Italian companies.

LAUDES EVANGELII: *Tatiana Massine and Angelo Pietro in a scene from Massine's religious ballet,* Laudes Evangelii, *which had its first performance in the Church of San Domenico in Perugia in 1954.*

TWO VERSIONS OF THE PRODIGAL: Left, Mario Pistoni and Gino Pessina in Aurel Milloss's version of The Prodigal Son *which was designed by Attilio Colonello (Photo: Piccagliani). Right, Pistoni with Elettra Moroni in the seduction scene from Pistoni's own version of the same Prokofiev ballet (Photo: Bazzechi).*

first male dancer had a moment of great inspiration. He heard with his ear and felt with his muscles that this selfsame Prokofiev score could serve a more modern dance form. And so he created his own *Prodigal Son,* who was no longer an Oriental youth going out into the desert, but a young man of our time and any time — the boy who gets tired of family life, of a loving but not too intelligent mother and a father who reads the sports page during dinner and mutters whatever comes into his head. After a violent scene, the father consents to give him his much-desired liberty, and, with some money and some new shirts, he is off to the wonderful world outside. The story moves along the same lines as Kochno's original, though the bad companions have become a street gang with their girl-friends, and the scenes of lust and luxury occur in a seedy bar, where teenagers dance to the juke box.

Robbed of all his property, beaten and starving, the boy returns home — the fatted calf is the woollen shawl with which his mother covers his freezing shoulders. The miracle of this choreography is that it has become not just the story of a youngster who gets into bad company, but that it remains quite evidently the story of Holy Scripture, true for our time as it was two thousand years ago.

I happened to be in Paris in 1928 — a very young man — when Kochno, Balanchine and Lifar were working on *The Prodigal Son.* Twice I dined with Diaghilev, and each time I heard him say: "Why can't we put the ballet in our own time? We know nothing about the dance forms existing in the Holy Land in the time of Christ". Perhaps it was Grigoriev, scared by the modernisation of *Romeo and Juliet,* in which an airborne Romeo kidnapped a young actress playing the rôle of Juliet, who had directed the thoughts of Diaghilev back to the original Kochno scenario. But, without knowing any of this, Pistoni has given us a remarkable new version of the same story.

By now, this company of twelve "Soloists" has a good repertoire, though they can only perform when they are not needed at the Scala. But in the long run it may be that this company becomes the first autonomous company of Italy. Such a group, if receiving its own subsidy, could in a very short time become one of the great companies in the world for whatever other things may be lacking in Italy, talent is not one of them.

LES DEUX PIGEONS

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This is one of the occasions when consideration of the costume designs should really not be dealt with separately because they are such an essential part of the whole composition. In both the first act and the opening scene in the second act, Dupont has two groups of costumes that give life to the period of the work. They are in some Degas-like dresses for the Young Girl's friends who appear in pastel colours. The fact that they are not ordinary street clothes helps to give the necessary air of fantasy and poetry. The Young Girl's white dress is charming — simple in silhouette which disguises an elaborate cut. The Young Man's costume is equally simple, just trousers, a shirt and a waistcoat which he later discards. The fact that both their costumes are plausible and wearable gives that gentle touch of realism that makes one believe in poetic fantasies. In the second act, a group of sightseers— top-hatted and be-crinolined and also in pastel colours — cross the stage and provides the necessary contrast for the gypsies.

Now before seeing the ballet I wondered a lot about those gypsies. Were they going to look like something from the *Maid of the Mountains* or one of those plates from "Fancy Dress" pattern books? It is in these costumes that I think Dupont has scored his greatest triumph. In the first scene the Gypsy Girl is accompanied by a retinue of gypsy boys. She is in bedraggled black with touches of gold; they are in rich sombre colours — reds, blues, mauves, greens, yellows washed in with black — which brings a tawdry magnificence to the scene and contrasts brilliantly with the pastels of the Girl's female friends. But it is in the second act that the true range of Dupont's palette really blazes out. The scene opens with the colours barely apparent apart from those of the passing sightseers. Suddenly as the gypsies start to dance we are almost dazzled by the kaleidoscopic wave colour from the underskirts of the female gypsies. Almost every colour you can think of is there—reds, oranges, turquoises, blues, yellows and so on — but so beautifully planned in their juxtaposition to each other that never at one moment do they become garish. This

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The Little Genius of Montmartre

DANCER IN HER DRESSING ROOM (1885) left: This charming sketch was what Toulouse-Lautrec in later years came to call "a pretty picture". It shows his debt to Degas whom he greatly admired.
AT THE MOULIN DE LA GALETTE (1887) below left: La Goulou and Valentin le Désossé were one of Toulouse-Lautrec's favourite subjects. This is an early study of them.
LA GOULOU AND VALENTIN WALTZING (1894) below right: By the time this drawing was done, La Goulou was in her decline.

by MARIO AMAYA

IF ever an artist arrived at the right time and place in the history of dance, it was Toulouse-Lautrec.

Never before had there been such a perfect match between art and the dance as that of the deformed little nobleman and the rowdy performers of Montmartre: his sardonic eye and sharp wit brilliantly trapped the mercurial movements of those popular dancers who sprang up overnight in the halls and cabarets of Paris in the 'nineties. As a result, the name of Lautrec will always be synonymous with the Can-Can and Quadrille entertainers whose first appearances signalled the birth of bawdy Montmartre as the pleasure capital of Paris.

The current exhibition of Toulouse-Lautrec at the Tate Gallery, unfortunately, is not a good one. The pictures are poorly chosen, they are carelessly arranged and, most serious, there is no theme around which the show is built. But it has one value in affording us a rare chance of seeing some lovely works by this fascinating painter which have been lent by the Museum at Albi — Lautrec's birthplace. Among them are several masterful studies of dancers, which must rank among the most profound and genuine expressions of movement ever rendered by any artist.

THE DANCE IN ART: 3

Although he did not really investigate the world of dance until he came to live in Montmartre, movement had always intrigued him, particularly the light, speedy, flashing movements of horses. Horses pulling carriages through the Bois or galloping in the fields of Province or merely shifting nervously as they waited to be saddled. His precocious talent for sketching action in a lightning line, found horses to be the one subject which summed up all the energy of intense animal movement, with its quickness, force and graceful beauty.

How interesting that another painter, Edouard Degas, whose name also was to mean so much to the dance and whose work was to be such an inspiration to Lautrec, had the same irresistible attraction to horses.

At the age of fourteen, Henri had two serious falls, first breaking one leg and then the other. They failed to mend properly and as he grew older it became apparent that although his torso would be normal, his legs would always be stunted and twisted. No longer able to pursue the sports that had been such an integral part of his life, Toulouse-Lautrec idled away three long, tedious years of convalescence by painting and drawing.

At seventeen his father, who had grown bored with a son that could not share his own outdoor pleasures, finally gave in and consented to allow him to study in Paris.

Why Toulouse-Lautrec chose Montmartre is no mystery. His two friends Rachon and Grenier, who had taken him in when he first came to Paris, knew it intimately. They were in the thick of the small but ambitious artist's colony that had grown up there around several famous academic painters who had studios on the "butte". Lautrec was introduced to Pére Forest, whose wild and uncultivated garden on the corner of the Boulevard de Clichy and the rue Forest (now the site of the Gaumont Cinema) had become a virtual outdoor studio for the artists who wished to work in the open air. It may well have been in this garden that Toulouse-Lautrec met the crusty bourgeois Degas, whose work he admired to the point of adulation. Degas, who had a studio in Montmartre, came frequently to Pére Forest and after 1885 the influence of his style was predominant in Lautrec's work.

Perhaps it was Degas' carefully objective studies of the dancers of the Paris Opéra that first brought Lautrec to think of dance. In any event *The Dancer in her Dressing Room,* done in 1885, clearly shows the effect of Degas on Lautrec, with its seemingly accidental composition, its intimate viewpoint, its lack of anecdote, and most of all, the use of short, rapid brushstrokes to build up the background. This is the type of work that Lautrec himself was to call several years later, a "pretty picture". But although the theme is borrowed from Degas, already one sees the influence of an artist who was in reality far closer to the mature work of Lautrec —Constantin Guys (see *Dance and Dancers,* December, 1960). A magazine illustrator and archivist of his times, Guys' rapid, intimate pen sketches of society off its guard, were to achieve the same cynical realism and penetrating summary of an era as those of Lautrec. If Degas turned Lautrec's attention to dance, that was as far as it went. For the decadent, hot-house atmosphere of the Opéra, with its deadly repertoire of supra-stylized romantic ballets, had little meaning for the young artist. Unlike his mentor, he took no delight in tutus and *attitudes:* for him the great thrill would be to catch life unawares in the cabarets and halls, where movement was not composed and classic but rough and ready.

The dwarf-like but dapper Lautrec, who had already become a character of Montmartre with his top hats, his canes and stiff collars, took a studio at 19 bis Rue Fontaine, in the same building where Degas worked, at the foot of the "butte". Towering above him were the twisted streets and alleys leading to the top of the hill, where the white, shining minarets and still-unfinished Eastern dome of Sacre-Coeur rose haughtily above the tiny huts and walled gardens of this unpretentious suburb. At the most an eccentric *quartier* hardly at all known, Montmartre had its collection of brothels and dives, its dance halls and cafés, which the working classes, as well as the artists and whores, would frequent. The Moulin de la Galette, an old windmill, whose garden had been converted into a communal dancing place and bar, was the main attraction where the famous "bals populaires" were held. But so popular did this place become that soon a sort of impromptu floor-show was provided for the patrons by the gay and dissolute street girls who gathered there.

AU MOULIN ROUGE, UN COUPLE DE DANSEURS (1892): The Moulin Rouge opened in 1889 in competition to the Moulin de la Galette. It was an immediate success and became Toulouse-Lautrec's haunt. Here a couple of dancers get ready for the Quadrille, a nightly feature of this dance hall.

The most lively and exhibitionist dance they did was the *Quadrille Naturaliste,* a development of the Can-Can, which had been invented around 1830. It was later popularised by Celeste Mogador, who was all the rage in such dance halls as Mabille and Valentino around 1850 to 1870. But after the Franco-Prussian war, the Can-Can went out of fashion and was forgotten until the amateur performers of Montmartre revived it again, in the late 1880's, in the form of a *Quadrille.* This was danced in groups of four people who did a routine step together, sometimes in a line and sometimes in pairs, and then broke away at intervals — one at a time — to perform some individualistic feat or step that they had invented and which became a trademark.

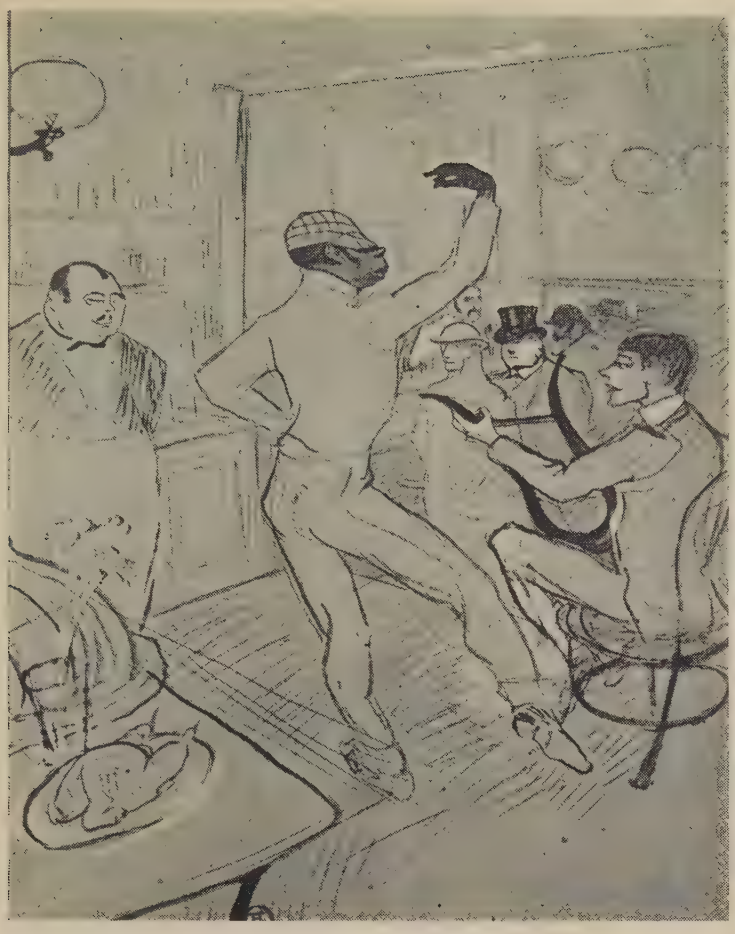
Night after night, the deformed Lautrec, elegantly dressed, would sit at a table in the Moulin de la Galette busily sketching the performers or the thronging crowds of patrons that wandered about during the intervals. His cynical sense of humour, perhaps aided by the effect of too many cognacs, was quick to catch the all-too-human failings of the characters with whom he had cast his lot. *Filles,* madams, pimps, lesbians, even an occasional tourist, all came under the acid point of his pencil.

It was at the Moulin de la Galette, that Toulouse-Lautrec first saw the astounding performance of La Goulou and Valentin le Désossé. But as with all the dancers he

JANE AVRIL (1893) left: Another of Toulouse-Lautrec's famous models was Jane Avril, the star attraction that opened the new Jardin de Paris. His poster of her is one of his best graphic works.

JANE AVRIL DANCING AT THE MOULIN ROUGE (1892) right: The daughter of an Italian nobleman and a half-mad demi-mondaine, *Jane Avril was a sensitive and intelligent dancer who always performed alone as she is in this Lautrec painting.*

LOIE FULLER AT THE FOLIES-BERGERE (1893) below left: This Illinois-born dancer became a sensation in the Paris of 1892. In this Lautrec drawing she is doing her "Art Nouveau" dance.
BALLET PAPA CHRYSANTHEME *(1892) below right: Toulouse-Lautrec's drawing of a ballet at the Nouveau-Cirque shows how the influence of Loïe Fuller spread even though this "skirt dance" was in Japanese costume.*



CHOCOLAT DANCING (1896) left: One of the famous stars of the Nouveau-Cirque, Chocolat, would often go to the Bar d'Achille after the performance to dance for his friends. This is one of Lautrec's most splendid dance evocations.

MARCELLE LENDER DANCING THE BOLERO IN CHILPERIC *(1896) below: Lautrec went dozens of times to see Lander dance in this comic-operetta. Here he paints her in a graceful S curve as she does the Bolero.*

ever painted, it was not only the virtuosity of these two people that caught his imagination; the artist was just as eager to capture the personalities of his subjects as he was to define their movements; often he did one through the other. The strange figure of the common but proud girl and her tall, *degagé* partner were explored with an almost cruel detachment in the many studies he did of them. Only the deep, unspoken compassion that broke through Lautrec's images tempered the brutal honesty of his work.

La Goulou — the Greedy One — was born Louise Weber (1870-1929). She was a brash laundry girl brought to Paris at 16 by Marcel Astruc. Described by her contemporary, Yvette Guilbert the singer, as "pretty and attractive to look at in a vulgar way," others were not so kind. She was at various times called haughty, ferocious, brazen, coarse and wanton. But with her careless knot of orange hair, her determined expression and jutting chin, her slightly twisted mouth which made her look as if she were always sneering, she had a sort of grandeur that only *canailles* of her type can possess. She soon won a fabulous reputation for her feats on the dance floor as well as her voracious appetite.

Her partner was the gaunt, tall, Valentin le Désossé— the Boneless One — who complemented La Goulou's fantastic vigour and limitless dance variations with a disjointed, relaxed and rather meandering gait, reminiscent of the negro minstrel cake-walkers of America. He ran a restaurant during the day in the rue Coquillere and took pride in the fact that he never accepted pay for his dancing and only did it for pleasure.

Without bitterness or mockery, but with devastating truth, Lautrec immortalised these two dancers. In 1889 when the *entrepreneur* Zidler opened the Moulin Rouge in competition with the Moulin de la Galette, La Goulou and Valentin were billed as the star performers. The new dance hall was an immediate success and foreign visitors, who had come to climb Monsieur Eiffel's tower at the Grande Exposition, went to Montmartre in the evening to see the Can-Can. In 1891, Cheret's charming and bubbly — but not very eye-catching — poster for the Moulin Rouge was out of print and Zidler asked Lautrec to design a new one for him. It could not have been a better opportunity for the artist to organize the dozens of drawings of La Goulou and her partner into one supreme composition which would summarise everything he felt about the dancers. The result was that overnight La Goulou, her legs kicking up a froth of skirts as Valentin strutted in attendance, became the prototype of the Can-Can dancer — and Lautrec became famous all over Paris. Although this poster, a major sketch of which is now at the Tate, is the most definitive statement by Lautrec on La Goulou, the small sketches which were done rapidly and expressively still tell us much about the dancer. A monochrome of the couple at the Moulin de la Galette, done in 1887, shows La Goulou watching intently with hand on hip as Valentin jumps in the air, kicking his legs apart at the same time.

A later study of La Goulou and Valentin waltzing was done in 1894, after the Greedy One had become too fat and was losing her popularity. Her brilliant success was short-lived and before she turned thirty she was already a has-been. She spent the rest of her days performing a *danse du ventre* (belly-dance) in a fairground booth

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ORIGINAL CAST : The finale of John Cranko's ballet when it was first given at the Sadler's Wells Theatre by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet on March 13, 1951. In the front, from left to right, are Elaine Fifield as Pineapple Poll, David Poole as Jasper, Sheilah O'Reilly as Mrs. Dimple, David Blair as Captain Belaye, and Stella Claire as Blanche. Photo : Denis de Marney.

Ballet Perspectives: 22

Pineapple Poll

by CLIVE BARNES

OF all the post-war ballets created in Britain, few, if any, have been so consistently popular with audiences as *Pineapple Poll*. It was an immediate hit on its first night and has remained a staple part of the repertory ever since, coming up season after season, usually with a surprising freshness.

The ballet was John Cranko's first major success, and in a sense it, together with *Harlequin in April* created a few months later, was the result of a far-sighted experiment that had been initiated by Ninette de Valois at the beginning of the winter season of 1949. From its foundation in 1946 the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet had been used largely as a choreographic nursery, and a number of young choreographers had been given the opportunity to mount ballets on the company. By 1949 De Valois seems to have thought it time to put an end to this wholesale sampling, and to place one choreographer in charge of the company's creations for a set period. The advantage of this scheme was that it gave both choreographer and company a chance to settle down together as partners, while the choreographer himself could work relatively unhindered, secure in the knowledge that he had a succession of chances to prove his quality and develop his talent.

In the event the choice of John Cranko proved fortunate, for this young South African soon began to show his worth. He laid his plans fairly far in advance, and as early as the March of 1950 he mentioned in a *Dance and Dancers* interview, that "he was working on" a ballet based on a W. S. Gilbert Bab Ballad to be called *Pineapple Poll*.

According to Cyril Beaumont (in *Ballets of Today)* Cranko first had his interest awakened in Sullivan by a broadcast of Sullivan's incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest,* a little-known work written when the composer was only twenty. Cranko also discovered that Sullivan's music was coming out of copyright in 1950, it then being fifty years after the composer's death. At first he seems to have thought in terms of using pieces that were unfamiliar and consequently steering clear of the Savoy operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. However, when he discussed the matter with Charles Mackerras, then on the music staff of Sadler's Wells, the Australian conductor persuaded him to change his mind. Mackerras had conducted all the Savoy operettas in Australia, and had developed a particular affection for them.

Cranko then had his unusually happy idea of turning to W. S. Gilbert's Bab Ballads for a story, and soon hit upon *The Bumboat Woman's Story,* which proved perfectly suitable for adaption. It was Cranko's artistic mentor, John Piper (who together with his wife has provided Cranko with many suggestions and ideas) who first thought of inviting Osbert Lancaster — architectural expert and cartoonist extraordinary — to design the ballet. As Lancaster had not done any previous work for the theatre, this proved to be a remarkably well-aimed shot in the dark.

The collaboration between Cranko, Mackerras and Lancaster was exceptionally close. Mackerras and Cranko, for example, introduced a few "textual" jokes into the ballet for the benefit of Gilbert and Sullivan devotees. Thus a group of infatuated girls moon across the stage to the tune of "Twenty Love-sick Maidens We" from *Patience,* while a gossiping *pas de trois* is danced to the music of the "Chattering Chorus" from *The Pirates of Penzance.* Then again the final transformation of one of the characters into Britannia, which provides the ballet with its hilarious punchline, was originally suggested to Cranko by Lancaster. Equally, Cranko made a number of suggestions to the other two collaborators, with the result that the whole ballet emerged very much as a corporate effort.

Perhaps for this reason it seems hard to believe that Mackerras's score is not an original composition, especially written for the ballet. According to Arthur Jacobs (writing in *The Decca Book of Ballet)* : "Mackerras insists that 'there is no original composition in *Pineapple Poll' :* even the transitional passages are taken from Sullivan. The orchestra used by Mackerras — considerably bigger than Sullivan's theatre orchestra — includes triple woodwind, three trumpets, harp and celesta." In *The Decca*

Book, Jacobs, with the assistance of Mackerras, has provided a complete table of musical sources, which I do not intend to reproduce here. However, the operettas used as treasure-trove by Mackerras were, in order of first appearance in the score: *The Mikado, Trial by Jury, Patience, The Sorcerer, The Gondoliers, Princess Ida, Cox and Box, The Pirates of Penzance, Ruddigore, Iolanthe, The Yeomen of the Guard, H.M.S. Pinafore,* and the overture *Di Ballo.*

Although Cranko's task in adapting the Gilbert ballad was perhaps less arduous than Mackerras's brilliant patchworking of the Sullivan music, he had to make a number of changes before it was suitable for ballet. The opening stanza of the *Bumboat Woman's Story,* is not perhaps the most promising passage in literature for the prospective librettist's eye to fall upon:

I'm old, my dears, and shrivelled with age, and work, and grief.
My eyes are gone, and my teeth have been drawn by time, the thief!
For terrible sights I've seen, and dangers great I've run —
I'm nearly seventy now, and my work is almost done!

Even though the events of the story took place ten years earlier, when Poll Pineapple "was barely sixty then", the idea of a sixty-year-old ballerina is not altogether entrancing. Consequently, Cranko's first action was to make his heroine a young girl, and also to change her name from Poll Pineapple to the more attractive Pineapple Poll. He also rapidly promoted that "kind commander . . . anchored in Portsmouth Bay" from Lieutenant Belaye to Captain. By making the Captain's wife his fiancée, giving her a brand new chaperone, Mrs. Dimple, and adding another new character in the woebegone shape of Jasper, pot-boy of the Portsmouth hostelry, "The Steam Packet", Cranko was able to construct a serviceable scenario.

This done, Mackerras patiently played over on the piano pieces of the operettas, while Cranko selected the music for each individual episode. From this Mackerras constructed the score, and Cranko was then able to start rehearsing with the company. The first performance on March 13, 1951, was something of a Cranko benefit, for the programme consisted of *Sea Change, Pineapple Poll, Beauty and the Beast* and *Pastorale* — the first four products of Cranko's reign as principal choreographer to the Theatre Ballet.

The principal rôles were created by Elaine Fifield as Poll, David Blair as Belaye, David Poole as Jasper, Stella Claire as Blanche and Sheilah O'Reilly as Mrs. Dimple. The crew of H.M.S. Hot Cross Bun was Stanley Holden, David Gill, Michael Hogan, Donald McAlpine, Maurice Metliss and Peter Wright, while the Sweethearts, Wives, etc., were Yvonne Barnes, Shirley Bishop, Joan Cadzow, Stella Farrance, Maryon Lane and Doreen Tempest. The ballet was first given at Covent Garden on the afternoon of December 26, 1957, with Patricia Cox as Poll and Donald Britton as Belaye. The work has also been produced by the Borovansky' Company in Australia (where Poll was first danced by Kathleen Gorham, with Paul Grinwis as Belaye) and more recently in Canda, by the Canadian National Ballet, when the leading rôles were first taken by Betty Pope and Lawrence Adams.

Before looking at *Pineapple Poll* in more detail, it may be worth noting the way in which it shows Cranko's early concern to produce specifically *English* ballets. Comparatively few of our choreographers have evinced much interest in works consciously showing aspects of the Britsh character or the British way of life. Clearly De Valois, with her *Job* and *The Rake's Progress,* to name only two, is an exception, and Cranko is another. Whereas De Valois has taken her inspiration from British painters — Blake, Hogarth and Rowlandson — Cranko has looked towards popular literary sources both in *Pineapple Poll* and its successor *Sweeney Todd.*

Choreographically, the main influence on *Pineapple Poll* would appear to have been Massine — and when Sol Hurok wrote that it was "a kind of British *Gaîté Parisienne"* he was unconsciously perhaps being less than just to its merits, yet it still gives a fair idea of its *ballet bouffe* nature. Cranko had, in fact, danced with Massine, when Massine first produced his revised version of *Mam'zelle Angot* for the Royal Ballet in 1947, and the similarity between the two works is quite marked. In dramatic construction the ballets have much in common, and even their style of choreography reveals a family likeness.

The two words that spring most easily to mind in considering the choreography of *Pineapple Poll,* are "apt" and "effective". There is no sense of straining inventiveness, and no break to the choreographic flow. Cranko shows a clever resourcefulness in the way he makes use of the basic dance materials to hand — his boisterous, yet almost witty, transformation of the Sailors' Hornpipe; the knock-kneed shakes allotted to Belaye's "crew" of lovesick maidens (which seem to have been inspired by the then current vogue for the Charleston) when it was frightened by his delayed-action cannon; and, rather more subtly, the way in which Cranko indicates desolation by nothing more than a dejectedly flapping wrist in a classical arabesque.

The choreography has an extrovert vigour that was entirely appropriate for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. It provided fat dancing rôles for its entire cast, and possibly gave the first, and if not the first the strongest, hint that a new generation of British male dancers was on the horizon. The only place where the choreography does fall somewhat flat is right at the end, after the exhilarating *pas de six* for the sailors, when the typically Massinian circular *finale* comes as something of an anti-climax.

Apart from the work's choreographic fluency, it is also notable for Cranko's extremely skilful production. The shipboard scene is full of beautifully contrived strokes of comedy, and it is interesting to see how the framework of the ballet permits a large number of individual interpretations of its principal rôles. Cranko has never allowed the ballet's comic business to become stereotyped and has encouraged, or at least permitted, all the various dancers who have appeared in it to add their own individual touches.

Perhaps the similarity between *Pineapple Poll* and *Mam'zelle Angot* is heightened by Osbert Lancaster's designing which has about it more than a smack of André Derain, the artist responsible for *Angot.* This is particularly true of the backcloth used for the interlude between the two main scenes, where Lancaster has created a quayside scene of great charm. But everywhere in these designs is the rubicund presence of Lancaster himself, making itself felt in the under-dressed nautical deities whose images flank the stage, and perhaps most of all in the knowing lady who acts as figurehead for the ship, whose vital statistics are nonetheless remarkable for being incomplete.

The fresh paint-box quality of the sets seem to evoke the tang of salty air, and the Victorian-style costumes seem a perfect ballet version of the Savoy operetta tradition. It is only in the last scene on board ship that Lancaster's inspiration lets him down, and even here the lapse is comparative. But for myself I shall never be reconciled to the solecism of painting in a sailor climbing up the rigging. This is one of the things a designer does not do, and here, and only here, Lancaster betrays his inexperience. (Having written this, I am reminded that in *La Boutique Fantasque,* Derain has a stationary paddle-boat in the middle of the back-cloth — which only goes to show!)

The whole ballet has a most delightful air — as I wrote after its first performance — of Gilbertian whimsy, and to me at least the ballet has always seemed much more Gilbert and Sullivan than Gilbert and Sullivan!

Part of the ballet's first night success was undoubtedly due to the exceptional brilliance of its cast, and the manner in which Cranko realised its potentialities. Elaine Fifield was a delightfully piquant Poll, while Blair, jauntily dazzling, was admirably served by the part of Captain Belaye. David Poole's Jasper proved sensitive without ever once descending into mawkish sentimentality, while Stella Claire's vacuous Blanche and Sheilah O'Reilly's dithering Mrs. Dimple completed an altogether admirable set of principals. Among the *corps de ballet* Stanley Holden as the Master at Arms, Donald McAlpine, Maurice Metliss and Maryon Lane were outstanding, but everyone danced with a will.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this first cast is that with the exception of David Blair's swaggering Captain, probably all the other rôles have on occasion been better danced than by the originals. My own personal preference as Poll was the diminutive and scatterbrain Patricia Cox, but Maryon Lane, Merle Park and Doreen Wells have also been enchanting in the part. Poll has also been danced by Pauline Harrop, Patricia Miller, Yvonne Cartier, Doreen Tempest, Brenda Bolton, and Audrey Farriss.

Belaye is almost a foolproof rôle and from Blair onwards, although some have undoubtedly been better than others, I cannot think of any dancer who was completely unsuccessful in the part. Donald Britton — a ruffled cock-sparrow of a Belaye — has made the part almost as much his as it is Blair's, and he has been followed by Kenneth MacMillan, Gilbert Vernon, Peter Wright, Michael Boulton, David Shields, Leslie White, Alexander Grant and Desmond Doyle, all of whom have had individual qualities.

Of all the dancers who have played Jasper, probably Johaar Mosaval has been the most memorable, although interesting performances have been given by Stanley Holden, Walter Trevor and Ray Powell. It was perhaps Susan Alexander who was the dappiest and funniest Blanche, the others having been Maureen Bruce, Yvonne Barnes, Shirley Bishop, Gerd Larsen, Annette Page, Margaret Hill, Diane Forhan, Madeleine White, Valerie Reece, Brenda Taylor, Shirley Grahame and Elaine Thomas. Of the various Mrs. Dimples, I think I personally like Rosemary Lindsay the best, the others being Joan Cadzow, Barbara Fewster, Pauline Wadsworth, Maureen Bruce, Dorinda Brown, Yvonne Cartier, Yvonne Lakier, Annette Page, Sandra Vane, Gerd Larsen, Margaret Knoesun and Sheila Humphreys.

THE MARQUIS IN VENICE: The Marquis de Cuevas, who died on February 22, in Venice, the city where Diaghilev died. In the distance, across the Giudecca, can be seen the island and church of San Giorgio Maggiore. See "The Fabulous Marquis" below.

curtain up!

The Fabulous Marquis

WITH the death of the Marquis George de Cuevas at Cannes on February 22 ends a remarkable chapter of ballet history. In a period when the private patron is often said to have disappeared, the Marquis sustained for many years the losses of a large and expensive ballet company. He also provided France with the nearest thing it has to a major ballet company, apart from the company of the Paris Opéra.

Born in Chile, of a Spanish father and a Danish mother (he was related to the famous Danish choreographer and teacher, Birger Bartholin), he bore a Spanish title (almost invariably mispronounced). In 1927, he married Margaret Rockefeller and this connection with the fabulously rich American family helped the fortunes of the companies with which he was eventually connected. His first venture into ballet was in 1944 with Ballet International which lasted just one season. Three years later he bought the Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo which he transformed from a French company into a largely American organisation and later into a truly international venture.

Under the names of Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo, Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas and, more recently, the International Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, the troupe has toured the world and shown literally scores of ballets, divertissements and great stars to an enormous public.

Few of the new works achieved great universal success but the repertory always included plenty of opportunities for dancing and it is for the brilliant dancers he gathered round him that the Marquis de Cuevas will be remembered.

Hightower, Vyroubova, Marjorie Tallchief, Toumanova, Markova and Riabouchinska were among his many ballerinas. His male dancers included Eglevsky, Skibine, Skouratoff, Gilpin, Golovine and a whole host of others. Truly an astonishing collection.

Apart from all this, the Marquis will be missed for his dynamic personality. He was unashamedly flamboyant in a world that feared to be so any more. He organised a "Ball of the Century" near Biarritz and appeared at it dressed as the Roi Soleil; he engaged Serge Lifar in a much publicised duel in which honour was satisfied. He was immensely witty and both kindness and cruelty played an equal part in his make-up. He was also very courageous and one of his last public appearances was on a stretcher on the opening night of his spectacular production of *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Champs-Elysées Theatre, a production which has had such a fantastic success that it might well have started the company off on a new career.

At the moment, the future of the company is uncertain, to say the least. It has been announced that the Marchesa intends to close it finally in August, other rumours say that it might even close before that. Whatever happens, there is no escaping the fact that one of the most extraordinary post-war ballet personalities has passed from this world's stages.

The Good Old Days

THE preliminary announcements of the Kirov Ballet's visit to Covent Garden (opening on June 19) reads like an attempt to put back the clock. Assuming that no one, outside specialist ballet circles, will have heard of the company, somebody has had the bright idea of calling them the Maryinsky Ballet. This causes me to wonder why they are not billed as coming straight from "St. Petersburg" and whether, perhaps, the Russians will get the Vic-Wells Ballet in exchange?

The repertory for the exchange visits is interesting. The Russians will send us three familiar programmes: *Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty,* and a double bill of *Les Sylphides* and *Giselle.* In addition there will be a full-length Prokofiev ballet, *The Stone Flower* (already seen in New York but never seen here), and a programme of short works and divertissements.

The Royal Ballet's five programmes for Moscow and Leningrad will include only one ballet currently in repertory there — *Giselle.* The new lengthened version will be given on its own as a full programme. *Ondine* and *La Fille Mal Gardée* are fairly obvious choices and there will also be two mixed bills, comprising of three more Ashton ballets *(Symphonic Variations, Les Patineurs* and *La Péri),* one by De Valois *(The Rake's Progress),* one by Cranko *(The Lady and the Fool)* and Fokine's *Firebird.* It rather looks as if Fonteyn will be appearing a lot during the four weeks, just as Ulanova did when the Bolshoi Ballet came to London.

Another new career?

AFTER a period when it was rumoured that John Gilpin would go to the Paris Opéra, American Ballet Theatre, Jerome Robbins's Ballets U.S.A. return to London's Festival Ballet, dance in St. Pancras Town Hall, it has finally been announced that he is to appear as guest artist with the Royal Ballet in April. The rumours that he was to join the Royal Ballet have, in fact, been pretty persistent over the past few years. At Covent Garden, Gilpin will appear for seven performances dancing the Blue Skater in *Les Patineurs,* The Bluebird and Florimund in *The Sleeping Beauty* and Franz in *Coppélia.*

Meanwhile, in other countries he danced Albrecht to Liane Daydé's and Josette Amiel's Giselle in Nice and he has just completed a season at La Scala, Milan, where he appeared as Franz to Carla Fracci's Swanilda in *Coppélia.*

I hear that Anton Dolin danced Hilarion in the former ballet and Dr. Coppélius in the latter. Possibly this is the beginning of a new stage in the long dancing career of the first British male ballet star of this century?

Another new site

THE London home of the Arts Educational School has moved around a bit and its founders and directors — Misses Grace and Lily Cone and Mrs. Olive Ripman — have been worried for the past few years as to where they should go next owing to the fact that they were obliged to leave their last premises owing to some development scheme. However, all's well that ends well and now the Arts Educational School is established, this time we hope for good, right in the centre of things —in fact, right in the middle of the Hyde Park Corner development scheme it would appear and you can hardly get more in the centre of things than that.

When I visited them the other day they seemed very happy in their new London home (another branch of the school, the junior school, is at Tring in Hertfordshire), the many spacious rooms were teeming with activity and "Miss Gracie" was talking about her dream which is to found

a university of dramatic art. The fact that this future project will be, according to "Miss Gracie", after her lifetime, convinces nobody. These remarkable people have been responsible for the early training of generations of prominent British dancers and any idea that they might "not be with us", as the saying goes, seems highly unlikely. They are particularly proud of their recently acclaimed star — Mary Williams, who scored such a hit as little Clara in Festival Ballet's *The Nutcracker.* In fact, when you think of the high standard of all the Cone-Ripman children in that production it would seem that they have a lot to be proud of — and to live for. All good luck, and honour, to these remarkable ladies and their school on its island in Piccadilly.

Landmark passed—and unnoticed

AS the Royal Ballet grows older so, like many of us, either its memory gets dimmer or it purposely seems less inclined to celebrate its anniversaries.

The company has now been at Covent Garden more than fifteen years, but the birthday passed without any special comment. What is even more interesting is the fact that the company, if we date it from the first full-evening performance it ever gave, has now spent more than half its whole life as the Covent Garden company. All the years at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells, and during the war at the New Theatre, add up to less than the time since the company re-opened the Opera House after the war.

Also, the Royal Ballet has now been two companies (in fact, although not at first in name) for longer than it was only one. The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet began in the same season as the original company went to Covent Garden, and ever since the two teams have worked closely together, although it is only now that they are beginning to look as if they may achieve the declared aim of full integration into one large company.

Camargo links broken

TWO more links with the Camargo Society (featured in the last three issues of *Dance and Dancers)* have been broken with the deaths last month of Stephen Thomas and Blaise Cendrars.

Thomas, actor, producer and stage director, was one of the original members of the general and production committees of the Camargo Society. In later years, he was a pioneer producer with the BBC's pre-war television service and later became director of the drama department of the British Council.

Blaise Cendrars, poet, did not work directly for Camargo, but was the original scenarist of *La Création du Monde* which, in De Valois's revised version, became one of the Society's earliest successes.

happy birthday to...

		April
Jane Sanders	Ballet Rambert	24
John Sale	The Royal Ballet	28
Ann Howard	The Royal Ballet	29
Yvonne Meyer	Ballets Europeens de Nervi	29
		May
Brenda Taylor	The Royal Ballet	3
Marina Svetlova		3
Elizabeth West	Western Theatre Ballet	7
Jacqueline Moreau		7
Don Spottswood	De Cuevas International Ballet	14
Ruth Ann Koesun	Amercian Ballet Theatre	15
Christine Hutchinson	London's Festival Ballet	15
Nicholas Beriosoff	De Cuevas International Ballet	16
Margot Fonteyn	The Royal Ballet	18
Daniel Seillier		18
Peter White	London's Festival Ballet	19
Erling Sunde	Western Theatre Ballet	22
Christina Stirling	London's Festival Ballet	22
Deryk Mendel	Choreographer in France	23
Graham Usher	The Royal Ballet	23
Travis Kemp	Teaching in Ankara	23
Ann Horn		24

HUROK DINNER AIDS ISRAEL : At a recent dinner at New York's Waldorf Astoria, given as a tribute to the work of Sol Hurok, 1,500 people paid 150 dollars a head in order to raise 250,000 dollars for the America-Israel Cultural Foundation which organises institutions and exchange programmes. In the picture below, Hurok (one from right) receives the foundation's tribute from its President, Samuel Rubin. Also present are the concert chairman, Robert Benjamin, and Russia's permanent representative to UNO, Valerian Zorin.

Dancer You Will Know

Photo : Houston Rogers.

JACQUELINE DARYL

BORN in Kimberley, South Africa, on May 4, 1937. Started dancing in Pretoria in 1949. Joined the Royal Ballet School in February, 1955, and became a member of the company in July, 1956.

Rôles : Pas de Six *and Leading Swan in* Swan Lake; *Queen Mother and Countess in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Gypsy in* Petrushka; *Ceres in* Sylvia; *Berta in* Ondine; *Red Girl in* Les Patineurs; *2nd* Pas de Trois *in* La Fête Etrange; *Creations : Leading rôle in* La Valse; *Gypsy in* Le Baiser de la Fée.

JACQUELINE DARYL is not so much a dancer of elegance as of mood and eloquence, and these qualities were first displayed a few years ago when she appeared as the leader in the *pas de trois* of girls in Howard's *La Fête Etrange.* She has a marked flair for acting, and has shown up well in the important mime part of the Countess in *The Sleeping Beauty.* Also impressive was her creation of the Gypsy in *Le Baiser de la Fée,* where her menacing presence effectively underscored the episode's strange atmosphere.

As a dancer her style is curiously hard to pinpoint; although clearly she lacks some of the more classical virtues, her movements have an indefinably personal quality that is yet agreeably distinctive. Already having taken Julia Farron's rôle of Berta in *Ondine* during the Royal Ballet's North American tour, she is now about to dance the part in London. And this, one would imagine, should provide a pointer to her future career. British ballet has always been short both of character dancers and mimes, and it could well be that in Daryl it has found a hope for the future. So far she has made the best of everything she has been given, partly because she has a natural stage presence, and her future should be rewarding.

The Two Phoenix

A trip to Venice where the "new" London's Festival Ballet opened its 1961 European tour at Teatro La Fenice.

by PETER WILLIAMS

Photographed by GIALOMELLI

FACADE: Antonio La Selva's façade to Venice's famous opera house, La Fenice. This is the entrance from the land. At the back of the theatre is a canal entrance where audiences can approach by gondola.

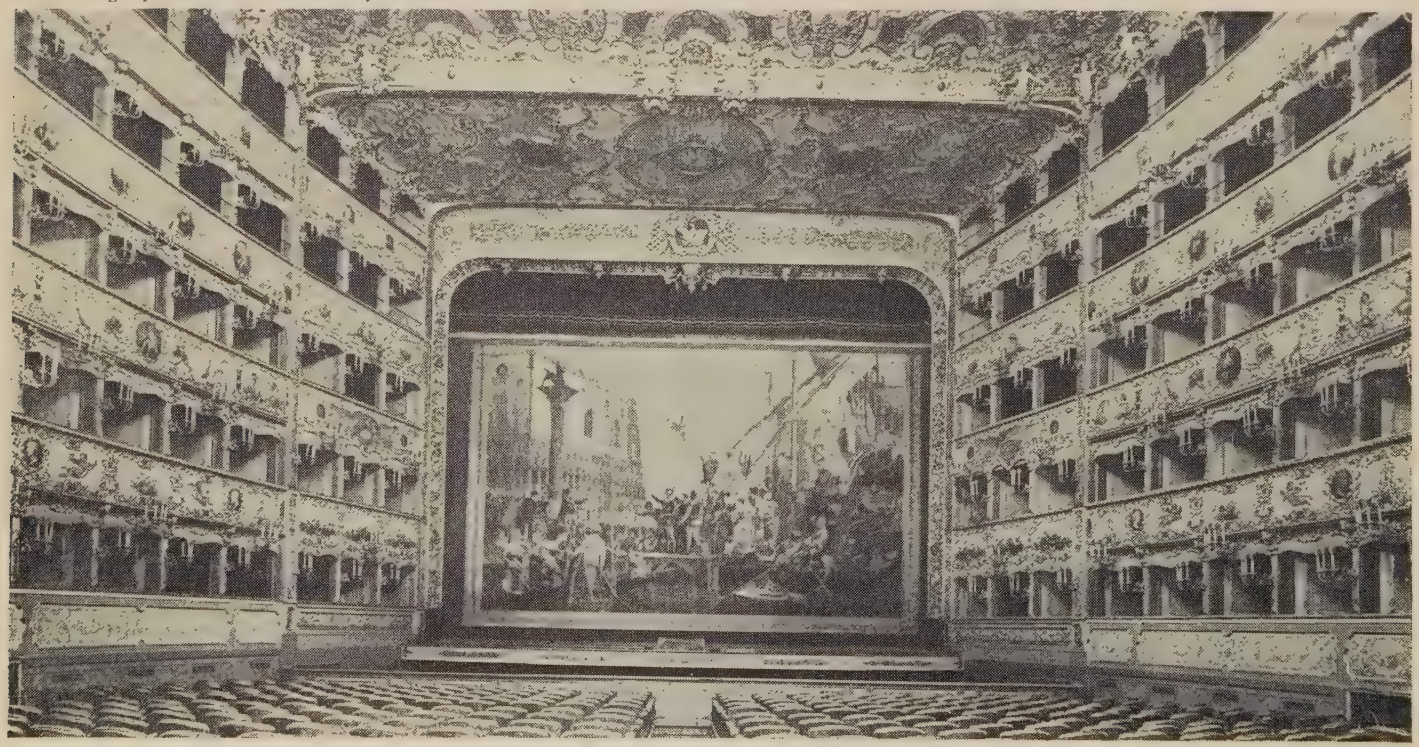
"THERE are many ways of going to Milan," I once wrote in *Dance and Dancers,* "but surely the most glamorous is with Maria Callas." There are also many ways of going to Venice but the way I went with Festival Ballet, apart from the supposed glamour of travelling with a truck-load of dancers, was many miles short of the Callas lark. You can, of course, fly to Venice — uncertain in winter — and I have arrived there on a large liner from the sea, but as we moored just off the Piazza San Marco the general effect of the Doge's Palace and all that, was that the whole place had something to do with Disneyland. Then there are all those exciting trains that leave from Paris, such as the Orient Express, into which you sink luxuriously and hopeful of the fact that your sleeper will be invaded by spies dressed as Marlene Dietrich — but, no, we didn't seem to go that way either.

The way we went was as mysterious to me as I guess it must also have been to whoever dreamed it up. Routine as far as Calais but there I can quite imagine why a Queen once said she would die with that name engraven on her heart. On a grey windswept platform a rude porter imparted the information that there were no bookings, no sleepers, no restaurant for some hours and certainly no chance of exotic spies. However, it sorted itself out somehow and so we chugged through what I can only assume was the "Low" country, pulling up at every likely whistle stop.

As darkness fell, a buffet car was coupled on and as deep night bore down the "buffet" aspect bore a stronger resemblance to a "diner" — things were even beginning to look rosy, although rosier, I noticed, for some more than others. Just as the rosiness was creating a feeling of apathy the train, somewhere around the Swiss frontier, took it into its head to divide in half. And it might have been quite cosy if only it hadn't meant that Festival Ballet was also divided in half and with one half (ours) without any tickets heading, we were told, for Rome. Philosophically we told ourselves that it had once been all right for the Romans so why not for us, except that we really wanted to go to Venice, added to which we had no tickets to go anywhere at all.

However, by putting on a convincing act that we were a party of lunatics escaped from an asylum who could only speak English of the pidgin, we managed to put to flight all those many gentlemen with

FROM THE FRONT: The proscenium and drop curtain of Teatro La Fenice. The curtain shows a scene before the Doge's Palace with the Lion of St. Mark in the foreground. The boxes and proscenium are in gold and turquoise while the stall seats and the lining of the boxes are in soft rose.



their constant demand for "billets". Thus the night passed and thus we escaped being hurled into the deeper snows of the Bernese Oberland. And so, as a drizzly dawn crept over the plain of Lombardy, we chugged rather unconvincingly into Milano Centrale (the train *was* going to Rome but it had to stop at Milan first). About forty minutes later the other half of the train plus the other half of Festival Ballet also arrived. What the point was of the "great divide" remains one of those eccentricities which always makes trans-Continental train travelling so eventful.

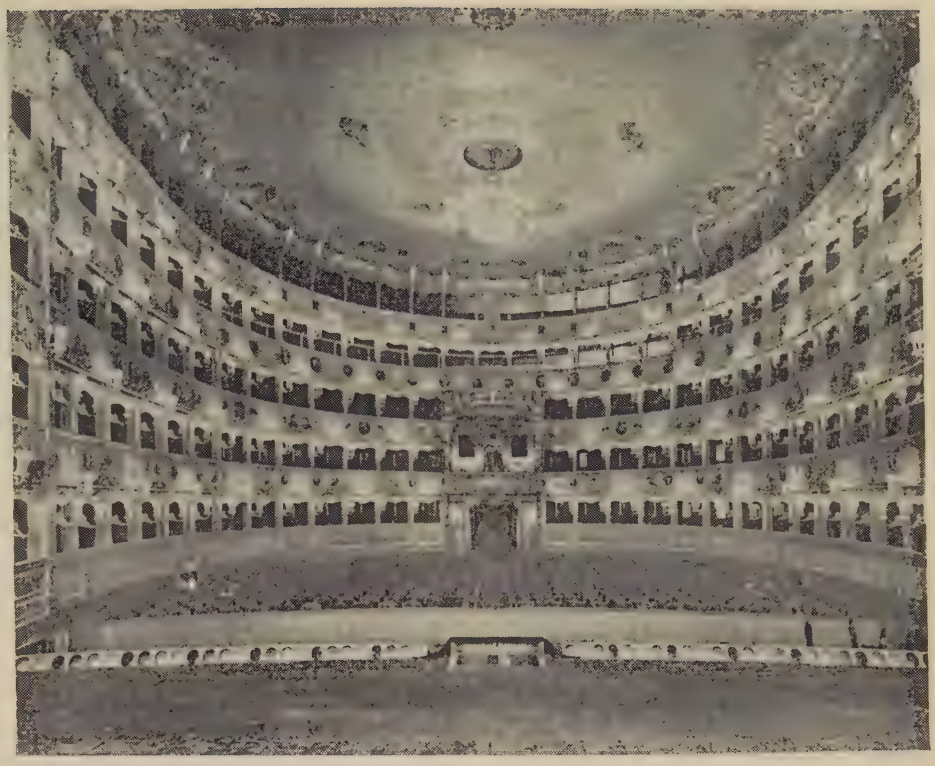
The connecting train for Venice left without us — no bookings, surprisingly — so about fifty-two dancers spent two hours pepping themselves up with Capuccino and Campari-sodas until the next train when an obliging stationmaster put on an extra coach. With the help of those packed luncheons which are so good in Italy, the trials and tribulations of the previous thirty-six hours seems to slide into oblivion as the train slid across the smooth pearly waters that flank the railway lines on the approach to Venice.

Like so many people, I have only known Venice at high season when its canals are as crowded as Hyde Park Corner at rush hour, when every view is obscured by parties of trippers or vendors trying to sell everything from their relations to a trip to Murano to see the glass blowing, and when the smells of the back canals remain impregnated in the nostrils for the next decade. In short, my opinion of Venice was jaundiced to say the least. If you too feel this way then I can only say — for heaven's sake go and see it in Winter. There are no trippers, no vendors, you have the art galleries and churches to yourself and everywhere is beauty so breath-taking that you can only stop still in your tracks and gape in amazement.

As far as the city is concerned the Winter is a time of suspension and nature appears to take her cue from this — islands and buildings seem to hang in a mother-of-pearl haze. At every turn there is colour in the architecture of such richness that you wonder why no painter has ever really captured it. The nearest, I suppose, was Francesco Guardi who in the 18th century captured a spirit that has not altered over the intervening years. The over-produced and over-admired works of the Canal brothers do no more than titillate those who see their world only through the medium of picture post-cards — atmosphereless and spiritless they seem to be.

The pride of this beautiful city, as far as concerns the theatrical world, is the Teatro La Fenice (The Phoenix) so called because the theatre has risen several times from the flames and ashes. It was in 1787 that the patrician Council of Ten authorised the creation of a new theatre and five years later, in 1792, La Fenice opened its doors and has been the centre of Venetian musical life ever since. Its curtain has risen on the first performances of operas by Cimarosa, Paisiello, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini and Verdi (the first performance of *La Traviata* in 1853 was a flop there) amongst many others. Although it only has a small ballet company providing the dancing for opera performances, the theatre has given stage to most of the world's most famous companies and dancers and is undoubtedly amongst the most beautiful theatres left in the world.

The façade of Antonio La Selva's theatre is simple and gives little clue of the jewel-like beauty of its auditorium. It can be approached from the land—a very unassuming approach through single-file streets and



FROM THE STAGE: This is the view that performers on stage get of Teatro La Fenice.

WITCH BOY *(below): One of the successes of London's Festival Ballet's present touring repertory is Jack Carter's* The Witch Boy. *Ronald Emblen (centre) is seen in the title rôle with Jean-Pierre Alban as the Conjur Man and Belinda Wright as Barbara Allen.*

LES SYLPHIDES: *To open the first Venice programme, Festival Ballet gave Fokine's* Les Sylphides *restored by Leon Woizikovsky. Here is the final group with Olga Ferri, Vladimir Skouratoff, Jennifer Alderton and Gaye Fulton in the centre.*

a small square; or from the water — by gondola through narrow canals and to a back entrance that could well be a setting for Otway's *Venice Preserved*. The foyers are classical, spacious and uncluttered — white and cream with accent being given by tangerine carpeting and glittering chandeliers. Theatrically, this approach is good because the first view of the auditorium causes a dramatic shock.

At first sight this auditorium appears to be made of matured gold Venetian lace. Gradually it becomes apparent that in fact the gold is not over-emphasised and is, in fact, used with remarkable economy and distributed by the hand of a master which La Selva undoubtedly was. The seating on the floor and the lining of the three tiers of boxes are of a very soft pink while the ceiling, a large expanse of turquoise sky, only has a filigree of gold around the rim. This same filigree of gold surrounds the paintings on each tier of boxes which are munificently studded with two and three-branch candelabra. The only other front-of-house illumination comes from a chandelier suspended from the heavens and which gives the appearance of a star-burst.

The front curtain has a view of the Doge's Palace and the Lion of St. Marks forming the background to considerable Venetian activity while the working curtain is of rich green velvet studded with pink decoration and encrusted with small pieces of looking-glass. the entire theatre has a patina that eliminates any garishness and its rich mellow flavour creates the right "ambiance" for any kind of spectacle that its curtain chooses to rise upon. The 18th century is always present but is never dominant and would not appear to frown on any period being performed on its stage, provided it was good. Backstage, of course, many changes have been wrought and it is as up-to-date as any theatre in Europe. It was here that Festival Ballet opened its 1961 European tour.

It was a suitable place for this occasion because there is something very Phoenix-like about London's Festival Ballet at the moment. Having suffered the loss of its Artistic Director and much of its star and soloist personnel plus a great part of its *corps de ballet*, it has, since the autumn of last year, had to build up virtually a new company. With the help of Leon Woizikovsky, its Regisseur General, and Charles Dickson, its Ballet Master, it has fought a winning battle. It won acclaim for itself during successful provincial tours and its production of the full-length *Nutcracker* at London's Festival Hall during the Christmas season brought in the best crop of notices, and deservedly, that the company has had for some years.

But all this was in England and the test as to how Phoenix-like Festival Ballet's resurgence was, came with the company's return to Europe where it has enjoyed so much success in the past.

To an English audience there was nothing new about the repertory consisting as it did of *Les Sylphides, Don Quixote pas de deux, The Witch Boy* and *Graduation Ball* for the first programme; *London Morning, Aubade, Grand Pas des Fiancées* and *Bourrée Fantasque* for the second. There were though a number of interesting cast changes.

There was a time when Festival Ballet gave one of the best performances of Fokine's *Les Sylphides* by any British company but in the past years it has shown a considerable falling off. Today, thanks to Woizikovsky, it has regained much of its romantic bloom. The *corps de ballet* are well disciplined and appear to have the right sense of mood and it again becomes the reverie of a poet which Fokine originally intended it to be. The Nocturne was very well given by the company and Olga Ferri, Jennifer Alderton, Gaye Fulton and Vladimir Skouratoff as the principals. Fulton in the first waltz showed promise even if she has not yet quite acquired the essential mood. Jennifer Alderton, who has more elevation than any British dancer I know, oddly failed to use it in her Mazurka. Nerina, I remember, also failed in this when she danced the same variation with the Royal Ballet and I am at a loss to know why this should happen in a variation that was primarily intended to be more airborne than anything else.

Skouratoff failed to bring that slow ease to his Mazurka variation that I always feel to be necessary — he hurried things too much and his movements were too clipped — but he never fails to bring a strong sense of male romanticism.

Ferri's Prelude was beautifully danced with all the feeling of wistful nostalgia that is apparent when it is danced by either Markova or Krassovska and she and Skouratoff gave good accounts of themselves in the Waltz *pas de deux*.

In the *Don Quixote pas de deux*, both

GRADUATION BALL: *Lichine's ballet ended a programme which had as its centre pieces,* The Witch Boy *and the* Don Quixote pas de deux. *Centre, just having finished the* Perpetuum Mobile *number, are Vassilie Trunoff, Jeannette Minty, Joan Potter, Angela Symonds and Susan Winterton.*

Marilyn Burr and Oleg Briansky seemed to be back in their old scintillating form. Both gave it with a punch which lifted the programme out of the dreaminess of the opening work (I still wonder if *Les Sylphides* is *really* the best opening ballet). Briansky has a handsome stage presence and he punctuates everything with a brio that lifts the variation out of the mere commonplace. It was good to see that he appeared to have completely recovered from his long knee injury. Burr is such a formidable technician that I wish she could invest her dancing with a little more natural feeling — her smiles are too hard and seem to emerge from a manipulation of the facial muscles rather than a natural expression of the joy of dancing. It is a pity this, because it tends to give her undoubtedly splendid dancing a false air.

When Festival Ballet first put on Jack Carter's *The Witch Boy* it was primarily intended as a vehicle for John Gilpin, apart from the fact that it also provided the company with a much-needed modern dramatic work. It almost looked as though it would become a one-person ballet. Now the rôle of the witch boy, who comes down from the mountains to find love and destruction at the hand of mortals, passes to another. Ronald Emblen is, of course, no Gilpin but he is a very fine artist in his own right. What he does to the Witch Boy rôle is very different but, in its way, is no less telling. Physically he has more of that embryo look that I imagine might well be a natural physical characteristic of witch boys — where Gilpin was evil and beautiful, Emblen is frightening. Both seem to me to be equally justified approaches. There were moments — in the *pas de deux* with Barbara Allen and in the final terrifying laughter — when Emblen was decidedly better. Even at this early stage, the ballet loses little by Gilpin's absence and it is possible that in time Emblen will develop his interpretation even further.

Belinda Wright seemed to bring greater integrity to the Barbara Allen rôle than any I have seen before — many little touches which make this girl a person of flesh and blood with ordinary human reactions to situations however strange they might appear to be. As the Pastor, Skouratoff brought more plausibility to this part than have any of his predecessors. The rest of the company gave the ballet with the same verve as did the original cast.

Lichine's *Graduation Ball,* which ended the first programme, though given with exuberance and much appreciated by the Venetian audience, still needs an enormous amount of polishing up. Its best points are in the work of the *corps,* in the first girl student when it is danced by Dianne Richards (who is delicious) in the *Perpetuum Mobile* lead by Vassilie Trunoff and in its Benois décor, specially when it looked as it did at La Fenice. Its worst moments are in a shameful *travesti* performance by Rodney Macdonald as the Head Mistress, a completely ineffectual performance of the Scotsman by Jelko Yuresha and by all I saw, apart from Jennifer Alderton, in the *fouetté* competition. Between these two extremes comes Louis Godfrey as the Drummer who though quite good needs to be far better, and Diane Westerman who is overdoing the coyness of the pig-tail girl, a part in which she once took Paris by storm.

The second programme opened with *London Morning,* a ballet that was always frightful and now is ghastly. All those connected with its creation should be doomed to sit through it twice nightly for the rest of their lives — *that* would teach them. I did not get the impression that the Venetians were very prepared to sit through the entire length of even one performance so dazed did they appear to be at this odd assortment of people gathered together in front of the Queen of England's palace. However, they did, and they got considerable solace from the rest of the programme.

Skouratoff, who had not appeared at his best in *Les Sylphides* of the previous programme, gave his best performance to date in his reproduction of Lifar's *Aubade* — turning and jumping as he did when he first danced it with Zizi Jeanmaire at the Cambridge Theatre about 14 years ago. Deirdre O'Conaire also danced the Diana rôle with her usual brittle beauty of extended line, though I wish she could be more expressive. The ballet badly needs a setting if it is to continue in the repertory.

Carter's *Grand Pas des Fiancées* is no Ashton's *Birthday Offering* as its characterless variations do not display any particular qualities in the six dancers. But it does have an elegance of costume, even if unsuitable to the title, Tchaikovsky's score carries it along and the coda is spectacular enough to bring the curtain down on enthusiastic applause. Marilyn Burr and Dianne Richards came off best in their variations. Olga Ferri was a little less good than she was in the original production — starting off splendidly but rather falling apart later — and a newcomer, Carol Yule, showed promise.

The final work, Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque,* is so good choreographically that it shows everyone up. The mainly new cast has still to get into the complex

DON QUIXOTE: *Oleg Briansky, now restored to health after two years of knee trouble, dances the famous* pas de deux *to Minkus music with Marilyn Burr.*

stride of this ballet but it got through it without mishap and nothing can disguise the fact that this is one of the most distinguished works in Festival's repertory and as the tour continues the company will doubtless match this distinction with their own performance.

The one real disappointment of the season was the orchestra, always reputed to be very good at La Fenice. Either it was unused to the conductor or else its members were still in a state of winter hibernation, but the total result was a horrifying mixture of *tempi,* and over-exuberant percussion, while the noise that emerged sounded like a Palm Court Ensemble in the rainy season.

Nonetheless, Festival Ballet emerged triumphant, collected some rave notices, played to packed and enthusiastic houses and, in fact, did what it has always done on the mainland of Europe. All of which proves that dancers come and go but a company, if it is established in the right way, continues. That seems to me to be the correct order of things.

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET

Swan Trio

MANY things have started in Brighton and it was in that splendid seaside town that I first saw Doreen Wells and Christopher Gable in *Swan Lake.* It was the last port of call for the Royal Ballet's provincial tour last year, and the company was dancing at the Hippodrome — a most remarkable theatre, oddly shaped and with exotically unusual bars. For this Saturday matinée performance of *Swan Lake,* the theatre was crowded with Covent Garden day trippers.

Wells is not at present so naturally well suited to Odette/Odile as she is to Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty.* At this provincial preview she showed promise, produced some lovely moments, but her portrayal not unnaturally lacked depth. She seemed too concerned with the technical aspects of the part to give much in the way of interpretation.

Gable looked as if he had enough confidence for both of them. Although he has a very young appearance, his strong stage presence enabled him to establish himself on his first entrance with no difficulty whatsoever. A very fine partner, rather like MacLeary, he also showed an extremely strong technique in the *Black Swan pas de deux.* He produced a marvellous sense of *joie de vivre* in his dancing, and technically his variation could not have been bettered by any of the Royal Ballet's Siegfrieds, apart from Blair and Doyle. In the *coda* he gave a continuous series of *double tours en l'air* and pirouettes with dazzling brilliance. It prompted the provincial audience to cheer their heads off, and at the time I though that if he could add just a little more precision it might one day start a sensation at Covent Garden, but more of that later. His acting was intelligent and his portrayal carefully thought out. I have rarely been so impressed with a young dancer, and never, I think, so surprised.

Also new to me, new to Brighton, and I believe even new to the company, was

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The Royal Ballet

in

GISELLE

The new extended production, supervised by Frederick Ashton in collaboration with Tamara Karsavina, now occupies an entire evening. Passages from the original score have been restored to expand the mime scenes, and Ashton has arranged a new solo in the peasant *pas de deux*.

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the *Pas de Trois* cast of Helen Starr, Phyllis Spira and Michael Coleman. Starr, the most experienced of the three, danced neatly and showed a charming personality, while Spira had speed and lightness, with traces of an untidiness, probably due to nervousness. There is a certain untidiness also about Coleman at present, and his stage manner remains a trifle gauche. Yet he showed strong technique with a good *ballon,* and obviously must be numbered among this company's many male hopes. Although this was a first performance it was in some ways preferable to his Bluebird, itself a very worthy attempt. Among the rest of the cast — tired after their exhausting tour, yet markedly improved from when I last saw the company give the ballet — mention should perhaps be made of Ian Hamilton's virile dancing as the leader of the *Pas de Six.*

Wells and Gable danced their first performances of Odette/Odile and Siegfried at Covent Garden on the afternoon of January 14. Wells had improved slightly, but I will comment on her portrayal later. Gable's remarkable assurance was as impressive at Covent Garden as at Brighton. Far from being over-awed by the opera house, he was even more impressive than earlier, and confirmed my first impression of his remarkable ability. Possibly the most interesting aspect of his performance was his acting, which was utterly simple and almost disconcertingly natural.

He seems completely to identify himself with the rôle, and so makes the type of flesh and blood Prince that I have not seen since Nikolai Fadeyechev danced the rôle at Covent Garden five years ago. Gable's dancing, while good, even very good, was not so exciting as at Brighton. He was very ill-advised to change his version of the *coda* for the more conventional series of *entrechats,* which did not suit him nearly so well. There is no really standard choreography at this point (many dancers, including Blair and MacLeary, perform *pirouettes à la séconde,* while Ashbridge intersperses the *entrechats* with *double tours en l'air)* and it is best regarded like a pianist's *cadenza,* where anything goes so long as it works. Gable would be very sensible to reinstate his individual *coda.* He also needs to jump higher.

On February 11, Wells and Gable should have made their *official* Covent Garden début in *Swan Lake* (i.e. one to which the Press had been invited), but in the event Gable had to be withdrawn. Owing to Britton's illness which prevented him from dancing the leading rôle in *Les Deux Pigeons* at its première a few days later, Gable, his replacement, had too heavy a schedule of rehearsals for him to appear in *Swan Lake,* and his place was taken by Desmond Doyle.

Doreen Wells had again slightly improved her performance of Odette/Odile. Technically the rôle seemed well within her compass, but emotionally her portrayal was far from being a complete success. Her hands were not particularly good (she has a very slight tendency to splay out her fingers), but apart from this her dancing was always correct, and in the *Black Swan pas de deux* she achieved some passages of genuinely triumphant dancing. Her interpretation of Odile was also preferable to her Odette, but in both parts she needs much more careful production. However, she has made a good start, and this sweetly hopeful fledgling Odette/Odile gives some measure of the immense improvement she has made since she joined this company at the beginning of the current season. After years in comparative obscurity, opportunities have recently been flooding in upon her, and she has hearteningly made the most of every one of them.

Wells was vastly helped at this performance by Desmond Doyle, who deserves the greatest credit for the manner in which he stepped in at the last moment, never having partnered her in this ballet before. Strangely enough, considering the strain he was presumably under, he gave his best ever Covent Garden performance as Siegfried. Up to then he had always kept his best performances for the Provinces, but here he was dancing more splendidly than I have ever seen him anywhere. His bearing is good and authoritative even if his acting sometimes tends towards the pallid. Now an excellent and dependable partner, and a distinguished bravura dancer, in the last eighteen months, Doyle has developed out of all recognition from his former rather diffident Covent Garden self.

Britton's absence also led to Robert Mead dancing his first Covent Garden *Pas de Trois.* For a first performance this had certain merits, and Mead is clearly a dancer of interesting potential, who — one would guess — has yet to really find himself. For the *Pas de Trois* he seemed to lack strength and *panache,* and the rôle did not seem altogether to suit his very distinctive qualities. **C. B.**

BALLET RAMBERT

At Richmond and Watford

ONE of the jokes that used to be made about Ballet Rambert was that if you could do two pirouettes Madame regarded you as a technician, but if you could do only one you were an "artist". If there was the sting of truth there, the joke no longer applies. Never has the general level of technique been so high, never has there been such cohesion and uniformity of style in the *corps.* Such qualities impress on the Continent where they barely exist, and yet they can be stretched to the level where, as has happened, the *corps* overshadows the principals in, say, *Les Sylphides.* But how much has the company really changed ?

It would seem that what has been gained in technique has been offset by the loss of personalities. But if personalities are no longer as strong and striking as those of yesteryear, at least Gillian Martlew can act and dance in equal measure. For the rest, most fall neatly on one side of the fence, and that is the dancing side. Of course, there are exceptions. John Chesworth, bless him, acts very well, though his dancing is strictly token. One could detect new and interesting trends in the recent standing-room-only weeks in Richmond and Watford — Richmond being the less rewarding, for the dancers were overtired due to TV rehearsals. Yet despite injuries and understudies everywhere, it was amazing just how little standards were affected, especially in *La Sylphide,* in which Lucette Aldous is now giving an almost unblemished characterisation.

The *Giselle* danced at Watford showed the company at its best, and here Lucette Aldous made an excellent impression in a rôle which I thought might never suit her. At the moment, though, its success depends mainly on her dancing which is attractively phrased. The opening moments are uneasy and here she seems to rely on a rather gritty and brittle type of charm as against a more natural projection of the character's innate shyness and spontaneity. That deficiency apart, her performance is good indeed. Moreover, in Act 2 she has restored certain steps, such as the *relevés développés* into *arabesque fondu,* which were neglected by her otherwise excellent predecessor, Beryl Goldwyn. Her balances were often phenomenal, her extensions effortless, and she filled out the areas of music with no jabs at accents followed by poses while waiting for the music to catch up.

Kenneth Bannerman's Albrecht is indifferent in Act 1, though superb in the second act. Anyone who saw his début performances some years ago would have surely offered the longest odds against him getting "there". In the star-glamour sense, he has little personality, but he more than compensates for this by the conviction of his acting which is firmly in the best Rambert traditions. It amounts to something far more than a dexterous attempt at manipulating the correct surface emotions into a dramatic whole. He succeeds almost entirely by living the rôle with a curiously compelling, almost neurotic force.

Freed from the hazards of over-performance which are enough to make even the best Queens of the Wilis wander through Act 2 in a state of blasé sophistication, and given an interesting new headdress, Gillian Martlew is again as theatrically effective as she ever was. Her grandeur and malevolent authority never peter out and, despite the work's familiarity, many of her entrances even seemed dramatically unexpected. Replacing June Sandbrook, who was injured, at very short notice, Shirley Dixon was at an obvious disadvantage in the "Peasant" *pas de deux.* But even after making due allowances, her occasionally spidery and jerky style made her seem unsuited to the solos. Her partner, John O'Brien, on the other hand, has improved immeasurably regarding presentation and the projection of personality. Finally, Norman Morrice gives an intensely moving portrayal of Hilarion which is devoid of all fussy effects. **E. C. M.**

Sylphide Postscript

LET me start with a protest. On January 28 I went to the Richmond Theatre to see the Ballet Rambert in *La Sylphide.* June Sandbrook was scheduled for the title rôle but most unfortunately a foot injury kept her out of the cast. However, her name was on the programme, and the management made no effort whatsoever to announce that her place was being taken by Lucette Aldous. This kind of thing is sheer bad manners — and ballet companies (Festival Ballet are particularly bad offenders in this respect) are getting all too prone to it.

Aldous's performance in *La Sylphide* is reviewed above, but at this performance she was partnered by a James new to London, Norman Morrice. His acting proved somewhat sketchy, but it was a sketch along the right lines and in places had a telling naturalness. His dancing in the second act was far less satisfactory, and he had little or nothing of the brio and technical precision Bournonville requires. However, the production as a whole has settled down extremely well, and I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon. But, why in the name of John O'Groats, has Madame Rambert decided that Scotland needed some Hungarian witches ? The name of the rôle so compellingly portrayed by Gillian Martlew is Madge and not (by any stretch of the Celtic imagination) Magda. **C. B.**

Owing to lack of space, some performances by the Royal Ballet and the Oxford University Ballet Club have been held over until next month.

Dance and Dancers . . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

ONE of the principal interests of great classical works rests both in the different intepretations which are possible and in the scope for rivalry which is too rarely given to dancers of the Opéra. We can see whether or not a rôle suits such and such a personality, and whether or not the dancer in question can reveal a new aspect of the work and get under the skin of the part. Thus while one dancer can discover himself artistically, another can fail to move us. Yet even the failures have their own interest in that they show more clearly the temperament and scale of a dancer's possibilities. We are ever ready for surprises . . .

These have not been lacking in *Le Lac des Cygnes.* So far, Josette Amiel has affirmed her status as the best Odette-Odile, with Peter Van Dijk as a remarkable Siegfried. They are a most harmonious and attractive couple. Claude Bessy and Attilio Labis, on the other hand, despite their very effective plastic style, do not respond to the mood of the work and they have not entered into its profoundly romantic character. We awaited with great interest the first appearance on this stage of Flemming Flindt, a dancer who has already won praise in Paris when he performed with Toni Lander and Festival Ballet in *Etudes* and *Napoli.* That his performance on January 23 was so disappointing in character, we must attribute to emotion and first-night nerves. However, the rôle does not seem to suit him well as he possesses neither the noble manner nor the elegant bearing or temperament.

Jean-Paul Andréani, who succeeded him on January 25, has all these qualities in full measure. Andréani, in his first major rôle for a long time, and one demanding a strongly developed expressive ability and almost continuous presence on stage, proved himself to be one of the rôle's best interpreters. He has all the Prince's virile elegance, bearing, restraint and authority. He faithfully portrays this character as a dreamer, ever youthful, underlining Siegfried's moving sincerity and despair. From the strictly technical angle, he dances the two main *variations* brilliantly, while the elasticity of his *jetés* and the breadth of movement with which he traverses the stage are remarkable. Once again he proves himself to be a strong partner and thus fulfils all the demands of Bourmeister's choreography.

His Odette, Claire Motte, hardly came near fulfilling our hopes. Undoubtedly, her extreme youth and somewhat athletic approach deprived her of the fragility and delicate charm normally associated with the rôle. The way in which this young ballerina, one of the Opéra's bright hopes, has stressed technique rather than lyricism is surely an error due to lack of production and her youth. Though she certainly possesses the assurance, authority and supple arm movements, perhaps she is just not suited to this character. Perhaps we would prefer less technical skill and cold precision, more softness in Act 2 and more allure in Act 3, a little more of Russian schooling and fewer echoes of Beretta's old Italian style? With her *brio* she certainly impressed the gallery, but we expected more of her, and *Lac des Cygnes* is not *Etudes!*

LA BELLE DE PARIS: *Claude Bessy in two scenes from Jean Jacques Etcheverry's* opéra-bouffe *at the Opéra Comique in Paris.* *Photos: Lido.*

THE OPERA COMIQUE

ON February 9, the Opéra-Comique staged *La Belle de Paris,* an *opéra-bouffe* by Louis Ducreux, with music by Georges Van Parys and choreography and production by Jean Jacques Etcheverry. Claude Bessy brought all her magnetism to the role of the fascinating *cocotte,* supported by the singers, Jacques Jansen and Raymond Amade, and the dancers, Ninon Lebertre, Michel Rayne and Jean-Bernard Lemoine. This trifle, created especially for Bessy, evokes pleasantly, though with sparse originality, the Belle Epoque so often seen on our stages. It scarcely embellishes the repertoire of the Salle Favart despite its agreeable music and René Gruau's ingenious décors. What is the point of bringing back 30 years late, *La Vie Parisienne?*

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

N.Y. CITY BALLET'S SPRING SEASON

THE New York City Ballet opened their twenty-eighth New York season with a four-week engagement at the New York City Center on March 14 to run through to April 9. Premièred on March 22, too late for review in this issue, was a new ballet by George Balanchine which had been announced with the working title, *Electronics.* According to an advance programme note, in this work the New York City Ballet was presenting for the first time in the Western Hemisphere the most revolutionary and advanced techniques in the field of electronic musical production. The basic musical composition, by Remi Gassmann, was executed in collaboration with Oskar Sala, at the latter's sound studios in West Berlin; it was first presented at the West Berlin State Opera last May. In distinction to other electronic work, no use whatsoever was made of basic sound materials, natural sources or sine-tone generators. Deployment and manipulation of sonority, and the essential sound material itself, is purely electronic. The amplification was ubiquitous, stationed on stage, and in the balconies and first floor of the theatre. The effect was promised to be merciless and fascinating. This ballet was commissioned by the distinguished architect, Philip Johnson, designer of the New York State Building of the Lincoln Center Development.

Sections of Balanchine's *Ivesiana,* which was first performed by the company in 1954, were also revived. Additionally, there were many repeat performances of

two of the greatest hits in the past year's repertory, the ravishing *Liebeslieder Walzer* and the glowing *The Figure in the Carpet.* This world première, the notable revival and the season as a whole will be reported in our next issue.

GRAHAM'S NEW YORK SEASON

IT is now definite that Martha Graham's long-awaited New York season will open during the week of April 10 and with Robert Irving as Musical Director. As we go to press, the working titles (subject to change) for her new works are *Visionary Recital,* to a score by Robert Starer and with settings by Rouben Ter-Aruturian; and *One More Gaudy Night,* telling of Antony and Cleopatra, to music by Halim El-Dabh, which will have settings by that genius of stage lighting, Jean Rosenthal.

VERDY TO WED IN APRIL

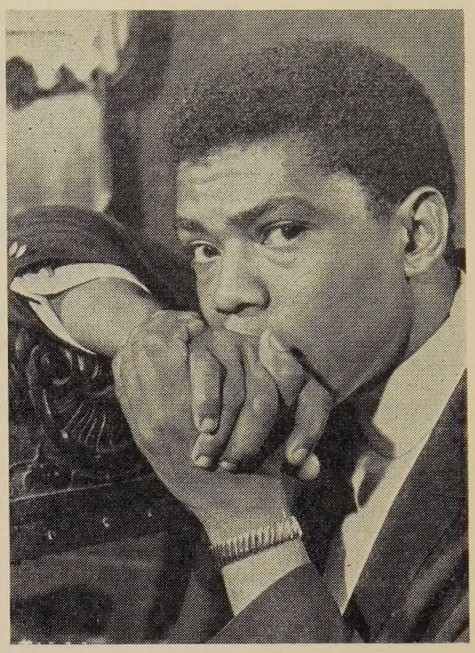
AFTER the conclusion of the New York City Ballet's Spring Season, ballerina Violette Verdy flies to London for her marriage to Colin Clark, son of Sir Kenneth and Lady Jane Clark of London and Kent. Their wedding takes place this month at Saltwood Castle, the Clark's family residence in Kent.

Mr. Clark, who is an executive producer for the Granada Television Network, obviously must be the type of ideal husband all ballerinas dream of marrying some day, for he has expressly stated that he wishes his bride to continue her career with the New York City Ballet during its forthcoming seasons.

ALVIN AILEY AS ACTOR

ALVIN AILEY, the outstanding young American Negro dancer-choreographer, has recently scored a marked success in the field of pure theatre. He is playing a lead rôle in the new off-Broadway dramatic hit, *Call Me By My Rightful Name,* a new play by Michael Shurtleff. In one of the very few plays of marked merit this season, Alvin Ailey gives one of the truest, most sincere and deeply moving performances either on or off Broadway. Blessed with a strikingly handsome and virile appearance, it appears that Ailey also has a remarkable command of the actor's medium. His voice, as an actor, is quite remarkable, and every movement, since he is truly a dancer, is instinctively right. This is especially apparent in a reeling, drunken entrance he makes in one scene. Again, at the climax, he has literally choreographed a smashing fist-fight with his co-star, Robert Duval, that is as ferocious and fierce as anything witnessed recently on either stage or screen.

Arthur Todd.



DANCERS IN NEW ROLES: Left, Violette Verdy, of the New York City Ballet, who is to marry Sir Kenneth and Lady Clark's son, Colin, in April (Photo: Maurice Seymour). Right, Alvin Ailey, famous negro dancer, who very successfully appeared in a straight rôle in the play, Call Me By My Rightful Name *(Photo: Fruedman-Abeles).*

LES DEUX PIGEONS

continued from page 7

sudden rush of colour to create a decidedly theatrical effect is something that Leon Bakst achieved in such a masterly way and which has been unequalled by any designer since. Again, as in the Young Girl's costume, the silhouette for these gypsy ladies is basically simple, but the skirts with their multi-coloured bits of material are more elaborate and are given a sense of movement that no English designer could today equal.

What Dupont has achieved is designing which keeps within the conventional bounds of the Operetta-like music while having a twist that brings it completely into line with today's thought and idiom. Personally, I find this one of the best designed ballets to be seen at Covent Garden and it should be carefully studied by all design students and also by those who are more established. When they have thoroughly digested the shapes and treatments of the settings in relation to the music and theme, when they have absorbed the range of Dupont's palette and its distribution, when they have realised the complex simplicity of all the costumes, *then* they might possibly have some idea as to why choreographers turn away from England whenever they possibly can afford to. When these lessons have been learned, who knows, one day choreographers may venture back into the home market.

Peter Williams.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Running Time

1st Act: 27 minutes.
2nd Act: 32 minutes.

Audience Reaction

14 curtain calls on first night. Cheering from all parts of the house. 14 curtain calls also for the second and third performances.

Press Reaction

(6 stars — Rave; 5 stars — enthusiastic; 4 stars — favourable; 3 stars — lukewarm; 2 stars — unfavourable; 1 star — pan.)

Daily Express ***; *Daily Herald* ****; *Daily Mail* ******; *Daily Telegraph* ***; *Evening News* ***; *Evening Standard* **; *Financial Times* ******; *Glasgow Herald* ***; *Guardian* ****; *New Daily* ******; *New Statesman* **; *Observer* **; *Scotsman* ***; *Spectator* ******; *Stage* *****; *Sunday Telegraph* ***; *Sunday Times* **; *Time and Tide* ***; *Times* ****.

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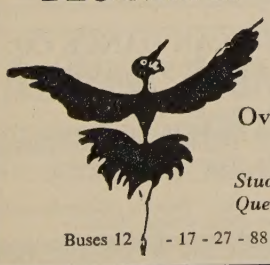

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The Dance in Art : 3

continued from page 21

in the suburbs of Paris. Her old friend, Lautrec, out of kindness and pity, decorated it for her with enormous panels of Can-Can dancers. Valentin returned to obscurity after his partner dropped from public favour.

Although La Goulou was certainly the most splendid and symbolic dancer at the Moulin Rouge, other performers there did not escape his attention : Yvette Guilbert, Grille d'Egôut, Môme Fromage and others whose names have been lost. One of his rare works which gives some idea of what the Moulin Rouge looked like is *Un Couple de Danseurs,* painted in 1892 (not at the Tate). Here, the slovenly girl who waits her turn on the dance floor stands defiant and staunch with her skirts raised high while her partner looks slightly ill at ease. Behind the couple is one of the *promenoirs* which ran down either side of central dance floor and above that is the gallery above for spectators.

Unlike La Goulou, who was coarse and vulgar and a natural child of the streets, Jane Avril was a thin, fragile girl, both sensitive and intelligent. She first appeared in the retinue of dancers with La Goulou at the Moulin Rouge, but her distinct individuality and strangely refined movements singled her out and she was soon dancing as a solo performer. The offspring of an Italian nobleman and a *demi-mondaine,* her childhood was difficult and often she was forced to beg in the streets for food. She had always wanted to be a dancer, but because she could not afford to study, she improvised her steps and relied on an innate sense of rhythm and her natural grace to carry her through.

In *Jane Avril Dancing,* done in 1892 at the Moulin Rouge, she was at the height of her success, yet Lautrec chose to paint her looking solitary and forlorn. She always preferred to dance alone, partly because she did not have La Goulou's talent for leading the crowd of dancers and partly because her improvisations were always different and unexpected. In 1893 Zidler opened the Jardin de Paris on the Champs Elyseés, where patrons could go after midnight when the Moulin Rouge closed. Jane Avril was chosen as its first star, and Lautrec designed the poster for her. But despite its gaiety, the drawn, sad features of Jane Avril cannot be hidden behind the flounce of yellow underskirts she kicks up.

One of the most important personalities who came to Montmartre, in an age of dance innovators, was Loïe Fuller and Lautrec, along with most artists of his day, painted her. La Fuller appeared for the first time at the Folies-Bergère in the autumn of 1892 and all Paris could talk of nothing else. With her flowing dress of thinnest silk, her enormous silk stole and her voluminous silk sleeves, which she deftly twisted into delicate arabesques, she seemed to the French to be the very essence of the new style of *Art Nouveau.*

Lautrec himself was one of the most brilliant exponents of *Art Nouveau,* with its new freedom of line, its deliberate tendril-like decoration, its sinewy contours and curvi-linear patterns. But whereas he used the whiplash curve and the S-shaped pattern to describe some penetratingly honest scene, La Fuller — who came from Illinois — used the new style to hide a lack of talent. However, if she could not dance brilliantly, she could at least invent some startling movements. Traditional ballet was replaced by a new vocabulary that consisted of running steps, rhythmic flights across the stage, flexings of the torso and expressive hip and shoulder movements.

Loïe Fuller was the first dancer to use lighting effects and all her performances were bathed in iridescent colours that changed as she danced. She used shadows and reflections and once startled her audience by appearing against a system of mirrors which gave the effect of a chorus of Fullers. If Toulouse-Lautrec may have thought all this somewhat arty, he still could not resist doing several paintings of her as projects for a colour print. The study at the Tate, dated 1893, shows a figure-eight swirl of draperies tinged with mauve lights, beneath which peeps the startled, rodent-like features of Loïe.

La Fuller not only inspired a rash of paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures, she was also the source of a full-length spectacle ballet called *Papa Chrysanthème* which opened at the Cirque-Nouveau a few months after she made her début. Set in Japan, the ballet was the epitome of *Art Nouveau* taste, with Japanese costumes, lotus blossoms, and a swirl of coloured lights. In the drawing at the Tate Gallery, done in 1892, the dancers in the foreground, surround a small lake laden with water-lilies and aquatic plants, on which a maiden in diaphanous veils dances in imitation of Loïe Fuller.

Apart from *Papa Chrysanthème,* the Nouveau-Cirque, with its clowns, tumblers, daredevils, riders and dancers was a constant source of material for Lautrec's febrile mind which constantly sought action and movement. But when it came to drawing the Nouveau-Cirque's negro dancer, Chocolat, in 1896, Lautrec chose the simple setting of a small café.

In 1895, a comedy-operetta called *Chilpéric* and written by Hervé, opened at the Théâtre des Variétés. Its star was the lovely Marcelle Lender, who danced both the Fandango and the Bolero in it. Toulouse-Lautrec went twenty times to see her dance, and when asked why he saw it so often, he replied, "I only go there to look at Lender's back. Look at it carefully, because you will never see anything finer." It is unfortunate that when he chose to paint *Marcelle Lender dancing the Bolero in Chilpéric* he did not do it from behind so that we could see her back. Instead, what he showed us was her delicately pointing toe emerging from a flounce of mauve underskirts.

When Toulouse-Lautrec painted *Marcelle Lender,* he had only six more years to live, and although those six years were studded with several magnificent works, the quality of his painting became generally less exciting in colour and line and more "tonal" in appearance. Yet *Marcelle Lender* leads on to speculate that if he had not drunk himself to death at thirty-seven, and had lived just nine more years until 1910, there would have been unlimited possibilities as to what he would have done for the dance and what the dance would have done for him when Diaghilev arrived in Paris.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET

at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden

March
20 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
21 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes).
22 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
23 *Les Sylphides, The Invitation, Pineapple Poll.*
24 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
25 **(M)** *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, MacLeary).
25 **(E)** *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
27 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
28 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
29 *Les Deux Pigeons, Danses Concertantes.*
30 *Ondine* (Beriosova, MacLeary).

April
1 **(M)** *Les Deux Pigeons.*
1 **(E)** *Les Patineurs, The Invitation, Pineapple Poll.*
3 *Les Deux Pigeons, Danses Concertantes.*
4 *Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes).
5 *Danses Concertantes, The Invitation, Pineapple Poll.*
6 *Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes).
7 *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Patineurs, Antigone.*
8 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Page, Hynd).
8 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Doyle).
10 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, MacLeary).
11 *Ondine* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
12 *Giselle* (Nerina, Blair).
13 *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Patineurs, Antigone.*
14 *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Patineurs, Antigone.*
15 **(M)** *Giselle* (Page, Hynd).
15 **(E)** *Giselle* (Nerina, Blair).
17 *Giselle* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
19 *The Firebird, The Lady and the Fool, Les Patineurs* (Gilpin).
20 *The Firebird, The Lady and the Fool, Les Patineurs* (Gilpin).
25 *Ondine* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
27 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
29 **(M)** *Giselle* (Beriosova, MacLeary).

May
2 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair).
4 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Page, Hynd).
6 **(E)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
8 *Coppélia* (Park, Gilpin).
9 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes, Gilpin).
11 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair).
13 **(M)** Royal Ballet School Matinée.
13 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
16 *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Sylphides, Antigone.*
19 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes, Gilpin).
20 **(M)** *Coppélia* (Sibley, Gilpin).
24 *Le Baiser de la Fée, Les Sylphides, Antigone.*
27 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Page, Hynd).
29 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes).
31 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).

June
1 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Gilpin).
3 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova MacLeary).

End of season

BALLET RAMBERT

March
20 Her Majesty's Theatre, Carlisle.
27 The Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield.

May
3 Tour of Italy (3 weeks).

July
17 The Sadler's Wells Theatre (2 or 3 weeks).

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

March
29 The Casino, Monte Carlo.

April
5 Teatro G. Verdi, Trieste.
10 The Hippodrome, Brighton.
17 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.
24 The Hippodrome, Bristol.

May
1 The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford.
8 The Pavilion, Bournemouth.
15 The Coventry Theatre, Coventry.
27-31 Teatro San Carlo, Naples.

June
5-11 Teatro del Opera, Rome.
13, 14 Théâtre du Casino, Geneva.
15-17 Théâtre Beaulieu, Lausanne.
20-23 Teatro Communale, Florence.

July
17-Sept. 16 The Royal Festival Hall, London.

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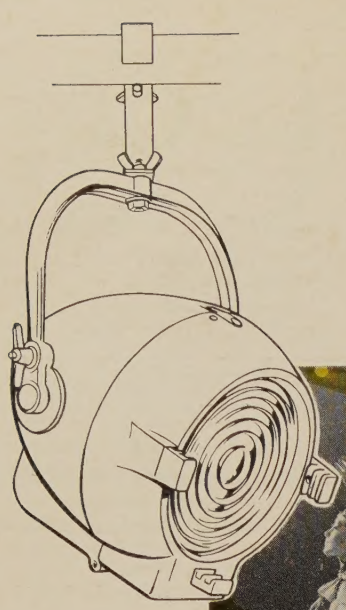

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